

THE  
CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE.

OCTOBER, 1836.

MEMOIR OF MR. JOHN SHELLEY,

LATE OF

GREAT YARMOUTH, NORFOLK.

MR. JOHN SHELLEY, the subject of this Memoir, was the third child and only son of John and Martha Shelly, of Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, and was born Dec. 31st, 1781.

In his early childhood there was nothing remarkable, except the delicate state of his health, and the parental tenderness and anxiety with which he was watched and tended.

It nevertheless frequently happens that men, who eventually rise to eminence among their contemporaries, are distinguished in their youth by the possession, in a rude and uncombined form, of the elements of curiosity and intellect, of taste and imagination, whence their future character is derived, while, upon those elements, time and events are found to exert a bland and healthful influence alike penetrating and conclusive.

This observation, so commonly illustrated in men who become the precursors and the benefactors of their age, received, as well in the

youth as the manhood of Mr. Shelly, a signal confirmation.

In his boyish and youthful days he was remarkable for the inquisitiveness and promptitude of his intellect, his affectionate disposition, his high conscientiousness, and his stern regard to principle.

These qualities, enhanced by time, commended him, as a partner, to the firm of Thomas Hurry and Co., merchants, in Yarmouth.—

This connection, which commenced at the early age of twenty-one, continued till their death. But long before that event, in consequence of the increasing age and infirmities of the elder members of the firm, nearly the whole of the responsible and executive duties of the partnership devolved upon himself.

Mr. Shelly grew up in a corporate town, in which the elements of party strife were plentiful, and in times that were fraught alike with excitement and with peril. Nor was he an unconcerned spectator of the events that were passing over him. He took, in early life, his

H 4

stand among the friends of civil and religious liberty. He declined, repeatedly, offers of introduction to the corporation of his native town; and while by his exertions as a speaker and a writer he pleaded for the liberties of his country, he showed first, by enrolling himself in a volunteer corps, and afterwards, by the part he acted in the local militia, that he was ready to unite in repelling lawless aggression had it been directed against her shores.

Nor was his active mind devoted only to civil institutions, or to secular pursuits. He was associated with others as a Sunday School teacher, in communicating instruction to the children of the poor. He was a devout and constant attendant on public worship: he united in a meeting held weekly for the purpose of social prayer, at which he is said to have prayed, when a very young man, with great earnestness and propriety; and of his familiarity with the sacred volume, proofs were constantly occurring in the quotations which he made from its contents.

The future life of Mr. Shelly, to the very day of his death, was nothing else than an enlightened exemplification, on an ampler scale, of the principles so early imbibed and avowed. He was a specimen, equally spirited and select, of a public man, whose character and actions were founded on the principles inculcated in the Scriptures, and from an adherence to which he derived a conscious satisfaction and enjoyed an untainted reputation.

It is on this account, that his surviving and religious friends have desired to hold him up, as eminently worthy of imitation by religious men, who are called to act in public life: and for this reason too, they have sought especially, by this memoir, to associate his me-

mory with a religious publication, which propounds and advocates with enlightened earnestness, the distinguishing principles of the Christian denomination to which he belonged.

On Tuesday, July 28th, 1835, Mr. Shelly went before a Committee of the House of Commons, and passed through a somewhat lengthened cross examination, in reference to the unconstitutional practices, which were alleged to have prevailed in Yarmouth, at the last election of members to that House of Parliament. At the close of his examination the Chairman, Lord Francis Egerton, rose to address him, all the members of the Committee rising at the same time. His Lordship expressed the high satisfaction which the Committee felt, at the distinct, frank, and upright manner in which he had given his evidence, and invited him to attend while, during the investigation, the other witnesses should give theirs. This distinguished token of respect he excused himself for not accepting, on the ground that he felt overcome by the heat, and desired to try the effect of cooler air.

On leaving the Committee Room, he passed an ante-room where he saw and spoke in his usual manner, to one or two witnesses in the same cause as himself, adding, that he felt exhausted, and would go and get some refreshment.

From the House of Commons, he walked to Parliament Street, and there called at the shop of Mr. Priest, a chemist, whom he had previously known. To him he complained of pain in the left side. The symptoms, as explained by himself, sufficiently indicated to Mr. Priest the cause of the pain; and he administered immediately some stimulating medicine. He conversed with Mr. Priest about

half an hour, chiefly on the nature of the attack, expressing his apprehension that he should not get well, and then taking with him some medicine, he put himself into a cabriolet, and was driven to his hotel. On entering the hotel, he told the waiter that he was unwell, that he was going to his own room, and that he wished him to come to him in about half an hour. It appears that, on going into his room, he had taken the medicine and had thrown himself on the bed; but that he left the bed, and had walked only a few steps from it, when he sank and died in the position in which he was found by the waiter.

The result of the *post mortem* examination of the body was announced in the following certificate:

"This is to certify, that we have examined the body of Mr. John Shelly, of Yarmouth, who died suddenly in the New London Hotel, Bridge Street, Blackfriars, on yesterday afternoon; and have found sufficient disease of the arteries (or blood vessels) of the heart, with softening and thinning of the heart itself, to account for his very sudden death; and that it is our opinion he died from natural causes.

(Signed)

FREDERICK TYRRELL, Surgeon.

FRANCIS HUTCHINSON, Surgeon.

July 29, 1835.

7, New Bridge Street, Blackfriars."

The inference suggested by this report, combined with the circumstances just explained, is, that the foundation of the disease of which Mr. Shelly died, had been long laid, and that any exertion which he had made, or any excitement to which he had been subjected, could have had only an incidental and trifling effect in advancing the catastrophe.

The member of the committee who last examined him, was the esteemed representative for South Durham, Mr. Pease, whose opinion

of him, and the spirit which governed him is conveyed in these terms:

"His conduct has been most gentlemanly, straight forward and handsome: no malice, but an honest determination to tell all." The same sentiments of him are most distinctly and emphatically pronounced, by the able solicitor for the Petitioners in the following extract of a letter written by him.

"That excellent man finished his examination in this way; he had pointed out the vice and drunkenness, which this system of treating and bribery had promoted. The opposing agent then asked him, if he meant to say it was confined to the voters only? 'No,' he said with much animation; 'that is the more extended mischief of which we complain: it extends to their wives, their children, their sisters, their friends; and works an immense amount of moral injury. It is its extensiveness which brings us here.' Within about one hour from that time our excellent friend was no more."

A brief analysis and review of Mr. Shelly's character will not, perhaps, be felt to be an unsuitable accompaniment of the narrative which has just been given.

As a Citizen, a Philanthropist, and a Christian, he may very properly and advantageously be contemplated.

As a Citizen.

In this view of his character, he was distinguished by intelligence, independence, disinterestedness, and candour.

He possessed a sound and vigorous intellect, improved by reading and reflection; and especially adapted for the duties of public life by contact and communion with the living world. Hence, his enlightened views of the science of government; of the constitution and relations of society; and of

the various questions of absorbing interest, which, at the present moment, occupy public attention in this country.

His enlargement of mind resulted, naturally, in a considerable degree of *independence*. In public life he was associated with persons between whose opinions and his own there was a general coincidence; and in this association he was entirely justified, on the principle, that, while solitary minds can effect nothing, the lights, and fervour, and energies of associated minds are irresistible.

But, while for the sake of accomplishing some good, he associated himself with many valued friends, there were occasions on which he showed his independence by differing, as well in practice as opinion, even from them. Those, therefore, who describe him as a *partisan* (and he has been so described) do injustice to his name and memory. That term is used always in the English language in a bad sense; and implies the compromise, more or less, of principle, for the sake of party. Such conduct was abhorrent from the subject of this Memoir. He was no demagogue. He sought not public objects for private ends. He was the friend of the many, against the oppressions of the few. He was enlightened, but not visionary; firm, but not dogmatical; ardent, but not rash.

Nor was he less distinguished by *disinterestedness* than by intelligence and independence.

He was influenced by no selfish and sordid feelings. His own property, to some amount, was not spared in the cause of the public. He possessed and exemplified that lofty virtue, so rarely found in public men, *disinterestedness*. It was on this principle, and on this alone, that he declined to avail

himself of connexions and influence that might have been found, on more occasions than one, conducive to the advancement of his elder son in the world. His apology and explanation to his own son for pursuing such a course were as far above eulogium, as the *disinterestedness* which inspired them is rare in society. His *disinterestedness* was the lovely companion of an integrity that never faltered; and which poured a softened radiance over all the virtues of his public character. Of this a beautiful illustration occurs in the last letter which he wrote to his son, from Radley's Hotel, Blackfriars, and dated 26th July, 1835, 9 o'clock, A. M.

— "for this is indeed a wearisome task. The fear of defeat; the anxiety, lest individually any thing in the heat and excitement of examination should escape, which, if not untrue, would at least require further explanation to make its truth and meaning evident, and *that* explanation is forbidden or curtailed. Then the temptation, no small one, which the violent amongst our opponents give us, to depart from the line marked out; and to force before the Committee persons and facts we would gladly keep back."

His *candour* was no less conspicuous than his intelligence, his independence, and his *disinterestedness*.

He paid and cherished, on principle, great deference to the feelings and opinions of those whom, in public affairs, he was compelled to regard as opponents. He neither himself used the language of harshness and contumely towards them; nor would he permit such language to be used, in his presence, by any over whom his authority extended.

It was under the influence of this candid and generous feeling, that he had formed the intention of



himself applying for the release from prison of a man, who had been committed for a violent assault upon his person. That intention, too, was coupled with the further purpose of giving or procuring for that man, on his liberation, some religious instruction, that his very offence might be made the means of his higher good.

It was the same feeling of candour, the same unwillingness to wound unnecessarily, that made him averse to the agitation of the question of *general* bribery. His disinclination to enter formally on that question, either by inquiry or petition, was founded upon the apprehension alone, that, to use his own words, "it might create among neighbours heart-burnings that would never be allayed." We know not that we have to ask for him any forgiveness of any one from whom he publicly differed; but in his name, in the name of his consecrated memory, we tender to all his opponents in public life a full and free forgiveness of such words and deeds of unkindness as they may have indulged in towards him.

We have the deepest conviction that, as a public man, *his acts will be his monument.*

As a Philanthropist.

The enlarged views that he entertained; the constancy with which he spoke of the diffusion of knowledge, of good government, and of free institutions, as means to an end, and that end the happiness of mankind,—his advocacy of the cause of education, in its most unrestricted application,—his efforts to promote the abolition of slavery in the colonies of Great Britain; and his desire to see that beneficent measure perfected by the admittance of our fellow-subjects to the benefits of equal laws and

equal justice,—his concern to promote plans for saving shipwrecked mariners,—the interest which he took in the cause of the fatherless, the widow, and the poor; the readiness with which he contributed, on principle, towards the support of philanthropic institutions;—all, all these considerations assure us, that, in the loss of him, society has lost a man of true greatness of mind, and of a comprehensive charity.

As a Christian.—We may mention his intelligent and cordial belief of the inspired volume,—his profession of the great doctrines of the Protestant Reformation, the doctrines of the sacred Scriptures; the sinfulness and helplessness of man; salvation by the mercy of God, flowing through the channel of Christ's mediation; the action and grace of the Holy Spirit to renovate the nature of man, and fit him for the society of God, and for the enjoyment of heaven; and a holy life, as the final and visible test of right principles: these are the great truths under whose influence he lived, and under whose inspiring and consolatory influence we believe and trust he died. He was a man of prayer, a punctual and regular frequenter of the house of God, and was ever pleased and happy to aid in the advancement of religion, as well abroad as at home.

To religion, unquestionably, belonged the honour of being the secret of the excellence by which he was distinguished. By it his benevolence was inspired, as by it his integrity was sustained and adorned; and *this* was the crown and finish of all the virtues by which his character was surrounded and beautified.

Nor can we dissemble our conviction, a conviction to which we feel called upon to give a distinct

and emphatic expression, *that on the possession of religion all the higher qualities and interests of man depend.* This fits him, and this alone fits him, to occupy with advantage the higher walks of usefulness: with this are bound up his immortal hopes, his never-dying bliss. The mere statesman, the mere hero, the mere philanthropist, wants the pledges and the earnestness of real and of endless blessedness, because he wants religion;—that religion whose vital and essential character are penitence for sin; love to God; faith in Jesus Christ; and a life of practical devotedness to the will and service of God.

Apart from religion and the belief that our dear departed friend was the subject of its principles and influences, we should shudder to think of his removal: but, “blessed are the dead who *die in the Lord*, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”

This brief review of the character and life of our late estimable friend may not unsuitably, perhaps, be followed and closed with an outline drawn up with a view to the public, and intended to be conveyed to them by another vehicle than this.

“We here record the death of a gentleman whose exertions and whose influence were alike extraordinary and beneficent. Mr. Shelly’s character, which, as a whole, was rare and peculiar, depended, more than that of any man we ever knew, upon the assemblage, in rich and nicely-balanced proportions, of the finest qualities. He possessed, not only eminent intellectual capacities and endowments, but these were associated with those virtues of the heart upon which the domestic and social character of men mainly

depend; and these, conjoined, were brought out and sustained by a calmness, a continuity and energy of action that conferred on his character a *completeness* of which we have rarely seen a parallel; and which fitted him to occupy the highest place among those who, by their mental, their philanthropic, and their religious efforts, seek to confer the noblest blessings on their race and age.”

The children of our departed friend will not easily understand the magnitude of their loss. Though their lamented parent was much abroad of late, many can remember when he was more frequently at home: and to the last, *home* was the scene most congenial to his tastes, and in which his character, peculiarly rich in the domestic virtues, displayed itself in all its attractiveness. His children have lost a counsellor, a pattern, and an intercessor with God. May they cherish the memory of their Father’s virtues and example! May they live in love! May they commit themselves to God, and remember that, though their earthly father lives not, their FATHER in heaven ever lives.

The congregation with which Mr. Shelly was connected, has lost, in the removal of their late beloved associate and fellow worshipper, an able adviser, a constant friend, and one whose concern for their interests was alike cordial and enlightened. May he be succeeded by others whose regard for its welfare shall be equally intelligent, warm, and constant! Of the kind part which he took in the Lord’s-day services, they will long retain a grateful and edifying remembrance. But he assists not,\* he partakes not now, in the worship

\* Mr. Shelly read to the congregation the hymns sung in the public worship on the Lord’s-day.

of the church below. May they, with him, bear a part in the nobler worship of the perfected church above!

His friends, with whom he was associated in public life, have lost a coadjutor sagacious, prompt, and energetic, yet courteous. They have lost him at a critical season of their public labours. May their reliance henceforth be less on men and more on God. May they pursue their schemes to promote the cause of knowledge, of freedom, and of happiness: but O! may no pursuit pertaining to this world, beguile them into a forgetfulness of their souls, of God, of eternity! 'One thing is needful.' May they

not merge the saint in the citizen. May they feel how vain a thing this world is to a dying man! How many sceptres and coronets are piled up at the gate of death!

Mr. Shelly died July 28th, 1835, and in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

Some public testimonial to his virtues and labours is contemplated by a numerous body of his fellow townsmen; but frail indeed must such a memorial be, how kindly soever intended, when contrasted with the divine eulogium—

THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE  
HAD IN EVERLASTING REMEM-  
BRANCE.

#### ON THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

One of a series of Lectures, forming a course of Divinity, delivered to a class of the young people of his congregation, by the late *Rev. Samuel Lavington*, of Biddeford.

If it were possible that one attribute of the divine nature should excel the rest, holiness in Scripture account would seem to carry it. "The Holy One of Israel," and, emphatically, "The Holy One," is the frequent and familiar title of Jehovah, and what he most delights in. He is great in power, rich in mercy, abundant in goodness, but *glorious in holiness*. Where is there any other attribute sounded forth so loftily, and celebrated with such repeated praises, as the holiness of God is by the inhabitants of heaven? We poor sinful creatures have a special delight in the *mercy* of God, because most suitable to us; his goodness is, in our apprehensions, his greatest glory; and if he remembers us in our low estate, and works out salvation for us, with what rapture do we cry, grace, grace unto it, and repeat, again and again, ever so many

times over, "for his mercy endureth for ever," "for his mercy endureth for ever." But the *angels* that are nearest to God, and know most of him, they admire the *holiness* of God, and rest not day nor night from saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts." This is the attribute that God himself has singled out to swear by, Psalm lxxxix. 35. "Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David." God swears by himself, because there is none greater than he; and when he swears by his holiness, it implies that in all the bright constellation of perfections there is none more visible and glorious than this. God can go no higher to show the immutability of his counsel than thus to say, "As I am the holy God, it shall be fulfilled.—The heirs of promise shall be saved, or else let me not be counted a

holy God." This then is the awful attribute that is now to be considered. O my soul, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. It is not without trembling that I enter upon this subject, for fear I should pollute God's holy name, by my feeble endeavour to set forth the sacredness of it. The lustre of God's holiness is too bright for angels to look at; how far then must it exceed the more limited apprehensions of men! It is high, we cannot attain to it. But however, as I am called to assist your apprehensions, I will give you the clearest ideas I can on the subject.

The holiness of God is sometimes distinguished into communicable and incommunicable. You may remember (for we have had frequent occasion to remark it,) that there are some perfections of the divine nature, which are absolutely incommunicable and peculiar to Deity. God is infinite, eternal, unchangeable; but so is not, so cannot be any creature. Their powers so finite and limited, their beings so contracted and short, their circumstances and themselves so perpetually changing, they cannot pretend, with all these glaring imperfections, to the least resemblance of those glorious attributes of the Godhead. But then you remember too, that there were some other perfections which we called communicable, i. e. such as may in some degree be communicated to creatures. Among these we have already considered wisdom and power; and holiness, that we are now to consider, is another. When it is said to be twofold, it is not because there is any real distinction in the attribute itself, absolutely considered, but only as it respects those faint and imperfect outlines of this divine feature, as

it is sketched out upon our souls, and the perfect portrait as it shines with overwhelming splendour in the face of God himself.

Let us now consider the *nature* of the holiness of God.

It is but a small portion of any of God's attributes that we can comprehend. So far the light of Scripture enables us to perceive, that the holiness of God implies absolute and perfect purity, whereby he is infinitely removed from all defilement himself, and hates every kind and degree of it in his creatures, Deut. xxxii. 4. "A God of truth, and without iniquity." The lovers of sin are too apt to fancy that God must be such an one as themselves; but "hearken unto me, ye men of understanding," says Elihu, Job xxxiv. 10. "far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should commit iniquity." He is at the utmost distance therefrom—there is no actual stain in his nature—it is not possible there should belong any temptation to it, and as he cannot admit it unto himself, so he cannot approve of it in another. Hab. i. 13. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity." It is not barely his will that is set against it, but his blessed nature. The Scripture compares sin to the most loathsome object, to show the perfect detestation God has against it. "It is that abominable thing which his soul hateth." And on the other hand, "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness"—"The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself," as an object suited to his nature, and fit for him to delight in. Hence it is that the man Christ Jesus is so infinitely dear to God. His human nature is perfectly free from all sinful stains, Psalm xlv. 7. "Thou lovest righteousness and

hatest wickedness, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows;" and hence it is that such poor unworthy creatures as you and I, if Christ is made unto us sanctification, and we are renewed after the image of him that created us in righteousness and true holiness, even we shall find favour with God, and be loved with the same kind of love as the Holy Father bears to his own eternal son; suitableness is the ground and bond of love.

1. The first property of God's holiness is, that he is essentially holy.

He is as necessarily holy as he is necessarily God. It is not (as I just now observed) an act of his will, for then he might be unholy as well as holy. He might love iniquity and hate righteousness. No, it is the essential glory of his nature, and so peculiar to himself, that it cannot belong to creatures, any more than Omnipotence. Angels are holy; good men are holy, i. e. prevaillingly so, but not without imperfection, for he putteth no trust in his saints, and he chargeth his angels with folly. In this sense there is none holy as the Lord. Holiness is a quality separable from creatures; alas, that ever there should be such unhappy proofs of it! What are devils, but angels without holiness? What are the generality of mankind, but men without holiness? So that creatures may sin, and yet retain their nature. But God cannot sin and continue God, for God himself is holiness. The least mixture of sin would destroy his being, 1 John i. 5. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." What a horror of sin should this create! It is contrary to the very life of God. And shall we endure that in our

nature which is so very repugnant to the nature of God? No, let us say as David, Psalm cxxxix. "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee, and am grieved with those that rise against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies."

2. God is the author and fountain of all communicated holiness. It was he that first stamped his image upon our nature, and when sin had defaced it, it was he that renewed it again by his grace, and restored us to some resemblance of himself. In some, indeed, this resemblance is so faint as to be scarcely discernible, and we must observe them narrowly, and converse long with them before we can find out their relation to God. While, here and there, we meet with a few that carry God's mark, as it were, upon their foreheads, and in whom the family likeness is so strong and striking, that every one at first sight perceives their heavenly extraction; and by their holiness in all manner of conversation, it is evident to all the world that they are sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. There is something amiable in this; even created holiness is a glorious thing; it is so in God's people on earth, though clouded with many interruptions and accompanied with much weakness, yet even their grace has a glory in it. The holiness of glorified saints and angels that never sinned, is still more glorious; how glorious then must the uncreated holiness be? This so far exceeds the holiness of men and angels, that compared with him they do not deserve to be called holy. What little holiness they have, is derived from God, and dependent on him, and limited according to their nature and state; but the holiness of God is his es-

sence and life, and therefore, like his being, is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable.

3. The holiness of God is the perfect rule or pattern of holiness to all creatures, 1 Peter i. 16. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy." We are even commanded to be pure as God is pure, and to be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect; not absolutely and essentially so, for that were to command impossibilities; but that we have by participation from himself the same kind and reality of holiness. In common life, if we have a desire to shine in any art or profession, we propose to ourselves some person that is most famous in that way for our imitation. Examples are useful, not only to instruct, but to excite emulation; and what can be more so, than the example of God himself, the great origin of all purity in heaven and earth. But the glory of Jehovah is too dazzling for us; we should be rather discouraged and terrified by one so infinitely above us. God hath therefore condescended to send forth his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, that having a pattern in our own nature, we might, by an imitation of him, arrive to a resemblance of himself. Here then is the copy you have to write after; if you would be holy as God is holy, be conformable to the image of his dear Son. There was not the least shadow of sinful ignorance in his mind, perverseness in his will, or disorder in his affections, no rebellion of the lower appetites against reason, nor of reason against God; but all was perfect purity and rectitude. He fulfilled all righteousness; he went about doing good; he finished the work that was given him to do;

and at length offered up himself without spot to God. Let the same mind be in you as was also in Christ Jesus; and walk as you have him for an example. In all your conflicts with sin look unto Jesus. He had no corruptions to struggle with himself, but he knows how to assist and deliver you under the buffetings of Satan, the allurements or disappointments of the world, under the pressures of affliction, or the views of death. Look unto Jesus, and see how faith, and love, and zeal, and patience, and resignation, had in him their perfect work. Oh, we should be a great deal more humble and more holy, if we looked more to Jesus, and learned more of him, who was meek and lowly of heart.

The first instruction to be derived from this subject is, that the holiest of men have cause to be ashamed and humbled when they come before God. There is not a greater absurdity in the world than for fallen, guilty, ruined creatures to be proud; it is, in the worst sense of the words, to glory in their infirmities; and yet who of us is altogether free? We look round, and see nothing but drunkards and whoremongers, and thieves and liars and swearers, and because we are free from those flagrant enormities, we take up a good opinion of ourselves, and go to the temple with all the assurance imaginable, with "O God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." But, alas, what signifies it how much we are better than other men? One serious thought of the holiness of God would make us abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes. None of us are half so holy as the prophet Isaiah was, and yet when he saw the Lord high and lifted up, he cried out, "Woe is me, I am undone, for I am a man of unclean

lips, and mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. Hark how the angels extol God's holiness! Look how the seraphim are covered before him! What then shall I, a poor sinful man, do in the presence of such a holy, holy, holy Lord God? O how I loathe myself in my own sight, when I see the humility and holiness of those glorious seraphims, when they are standing round about the throne of God. Do *their* hearts ever start aside like a broken bow? Do *their* hearts ever wander with the fool's eye to the end of the earth? Do they ever say, 'Behold what a weariness is it?' Do they ever forget God, and turn their back upon him, and let vanity and sin steal away their thoughts, if not their affections? O my weak and wicked heart, a comparison with *seraphim* is inexpressibly mortifying. But what wilt thou do then to stand before *God*, who is much holier than they as they are than I, and infinitely more?" So we may suppose the prophet to say to himself immediately upon the vision he had of the Lord of glory; and we (if through grace we are brought to a thorough knowledge of God and ourselves) shall be disposed to say the same.

The second instruction from God's holiness is, that there is no coming near to God without a Mediator. Only consider what the holiness of God is. He is not only removed from every kind and degree of impurity himself, but he abhors it in his creatures; and then consider what you are yourselves; how sadly depraved, every part and power defiled, so that in you, that is, in your flesh, dwelleth no good thing; and if with all this guilt upon you, you were to push forward to the throne of God, would not he spurn you from his footstool with indignation? Would

not he frown you immediately into hell? Ah, my young friends, this would have been your case; you would have hid yourselves, like Adam, from the presence of the Lord God, you would have restrained prayer before the Lord, you would have been afraid to pray, and you would have gone day after day without it, yea, you would have lived all your lives without God in the world. I say, this would have been your case and mine, if it had not been for the work of the only Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Bless God for proposing it; bless the Lord Jesus Christ for consenting to it, for undertaking it, for accomplishing it. Every time you are permitted to draw near to God, and the Lord communes with you from above the mercy-seat, and instead of frowning you away invites you nearer still, and makes you glad with his countenance, then think on Jesus, and adore that grace wherein he hath made you accepted in the Beloved—surely you can never love Christ enough. It is he that gives you boldness of access to the throne of grace now, and it is he that has engaged to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy hereafter. You would be ungrateful and inexcusable if you did not ascribe to the only wise God your Saviour glory and majesty, dominion and power, for ever and ever. Amen.

The third instruction from God's holiness is, that holiness is indispensably necessary to your dwelling with God in heaven; and that not a mere external holiness, a cleansing of the outside of the cup, an abstaining from outward and gross sins; this is not enough: there must be inward holiness too, a holy nature only can enjoy a holy God. Without this, there can be



no complacency and delight on either side. The holiness of God could not but abhor such filthy creatures as you, and your carnal minds would be full of enmity against God. The very prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord; how hateful then must their persons be! For what communion hath light with darkness, or what concord hath God with Belial? Do you not remember how that poor wretch was treated, that pushed himself in among the guests without a wedding garment? "Bind him hand and foot," (said the king to his servants,) "and take him away and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Why, just so God will deal with —, I do not say you, for I pray God none of you may ever give occasion for it; but so God will deal with all that attempt to steal into heaven without holiness. He would quickly perceive and severely punish the insolent intrusion. "What hast thou to do to tread my courts? Did I not tell thee that without holiness no man should see my face? Did I not tell thee that this place was sacred to perfect purity, and that nothing should enter that defileth? How then durst thou presume, with so much sin about thee, to come so near to me? Angels, take him away and cast him into everlasting burnings." Nay, if God were to let him pass without notice, the unholy creature would be miserable. The place, the company, the conversation, the enjoyments, the occupation, all would be unsuitable and disagreeable. To be confined among saints that he always hated and derided on earth; to be serving God day and night in his temple above, when an hour once a week in church was a weariness and a burden below; to be

always in the immediate presence of God, whom he liked not to retain in his thoughts; to be perpetually singing praises to the Lamb, whom he had degraded and spitefully entreated all his life. I say every thing in heaven would tend to make an unsanctified person miserable. If, therefore, you would go there when you die, if when you are absent from the body you would for ever be present with the Lord, you must be holy now, you must be earnest with God, to create in you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you. Do not let him go except he bless you, for it is a matter of the greatest consequence of any thing in the world to you. If you are not made holy, you cannot dwell with God, and if you do not dwell with God, you must dwell with devils for ever. Will not this make you endeavour to perfect holiness in the fear of God?

The fourth instruction from hence is, that the Gospel is of inestimable value, as it discovers the holiness of God, and forms the creature to a conformity to him. If it had not been for the Gospel, you would have known nothing of the nature of God, you would have had no idea of the beauty of holiness; you would, as the poor blind heathens did, you would change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things; and instead of that pure worship which you now offer him, you would mix all sorts of heathenish superstitions and impurities with it. You would have no notion of holiness of heart, nor any motives or helps to seek after it. Could you not kneel down now and bless God for the Gospel? Why did God leave *them* in so much ignorance, and

send his glorious Gospel to you? You cannot tell why, nor I either, otherwise than that He has mercy on whom He will have mercy. Will you not love him? Do you not love him for his distinguishing kindness to you? Are you not resolving that when you get home by and by, one of the first things you do shall be to retire and bless God for telling you how holy he is, and how you may be holy too? Do so, my dear friends, and take care that you do not perish with the Gospel in your hands; I mean, since you know by the Gospel what God is and what God loves. Follow after it, and do not be easy till you are what the Gospel tells you you must be; for if you were to die unholy after all, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for you.

The last instruction is, that all despisers of holiness are despisers of God.

There are some, you know, so openly profane, that they will make a jest of all serious religion, as preciseness or hypocrisy; and if they see a person that makes conscience of his words and ways, and refuses to run with them to the same excess of riot, they point at him and call him a saint, and discover no little bitterness against him. Now, in this case, their enmity is not against the person, (for if it were not for his holiness they would have no other cause of dislike,) but it is against what of God appears in him. And if they cannot endure so little holiness in the creature, how must they be affected towards him who is all holy? But, however, those flagrant scoffers and persecutors are not the only persons that fall under this censure. Those who neglect to cultivate holiness in their own souls, who make provision for the flesh to fulfil

the lusts thereof, and yet flatter themselves that they shall have peace, though they go on after the hardness of their hearts to add iniquity unto iniquity, and drunkenness to thirst; who spare no pains to keep up the form of godliness, and at the same time roll their favourite iniquity as a sweet morsel under their tongues. All those are despisers of holiness, and consequently despisers of God. I cannot argue with them now; but I can tell them there is a day fixed, and it is coming on apace, when all those despisers shall wonder and perish; for the sentence shall then go forth, (and a more dreadful one there cannot be,) "Let him that is filthy, be filthy still."

And thus I have set before you this awful attribute. You have seen how holy God is in himself, and how He loves holiness in His creatures; go home and pray that you may be like God, and be reckoned among the children whom he loves. The holiness of God, though it be severe against impenitent sinners, is reconciled to penitent believers. The terror of it is only to the wicked; to the Christian it is a fountain of comfort. Isaiah xli. 14.—"Fear not, thou worm Jacob, I will help thee, saith thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Thou art a poor worm; my holiness shall not hurt thee, I will not tread upon thee, but will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." If you are now groaning under the burden of sin, consider God hates sin; and if you hate it too, it is a sign that you are in some measure holy as God is holy. If you are lamenting the weakness of grace, consider God is communicatively holy. He can impart holiness to his creatures. He can perfect holiness in them. There are many ways in which the holiness of God affords great en-

couragement to holy souls. O, give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness! Let holiness to the Lord be visible on every member of your bodies, on every faculty of your souls, and in every action of

your lives; and may the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirits, and soul and body, may be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### DR. CODMAN'S NARRATIVE OF A VISIT TO ENGLAND, 1835.

THE opinions of intelligent and pious foreigners, and especially of educated Christian ministers from the United States of America, respecting the ecclesiastical affairs of this country, deserve the candid attention of the Christian public. With this object we shall transcribe from Dr. Codman's little volume a series of extracts upon these topics, and on which we shall offer some friendly annotations.

##### *Church Missionary Society.*

"On the next day (Tuesday, May 5th,) the Church Missionary Society held its Anniversary in Exeter Hall. Dr Spring, who had arrived the evening before from Paris, accompanied me at an early hour to the committee-room of the Society, where we delivered our credentials as delegates from the American Board. We were told by some of our Dissenting Brethren that we should not be invited to speak at this meeting, as we were not churchmen, but we could not believe it, as whatever might be the prejudices existing in this Society against Dissenters from the established church in England, we imagined that they could not extend to the Presbyterian and Congregational churches of our own country, much less to regularly commissioned delegates from the American Board. *But it was even so.* Our commissions were read in the committee-room, but no other notice was taken of us or of the Society we had the honour to represent. We were suffered to sit in silence on the platform, and to listen to several addresses from noblemen, and bishops and other dignitaries of the Church of England. The Bishops of Chester, and of Lichfield and Coventry, whom I heard with great pleasure, not only on this occasion, but at all other times during the season of Anniversaries, are excellent men, decidedly evangelical, and eminently devoted to the cause of

missions. We had the opportunity also of hearing on this occasion one of our own countrymen, Bishop M'Ilvaine, of Ohio, who has been for some months past in this country on an agency for Kenyon College. As he did not lie under the bar of dissent from the rites and ceremonies of the mother church, he was permitted to address the audience, and was received with loud applause. He was, as usual, eloquent and interesting; but I should have been better pleased, had he been less fulsome in landing the Church of England, its universities, and its sixteen thousand clergy, many of whom he must have well known are far removed from that evangelical doctrine and consistent practice for which he himself is so justly distinguished. The Bishop, I understand, received much polite attention, and gained much pecuniary aid for the object of his mission from the members of the established Church, and it is not surprising that from his kind and benevolent feelings he should have been led on this occasion to have said some things which appeared to me like extravagant and unmerited praise."

Episcopacy is pre-eminently sectarian in every land, and we should have thought that the worthy delegates had heard enough in New York of the only "true line of succession"—of an "authorized ministry"—of "valid ordinances"—and of the guilt of those who "obstinately condemn the means which God has appointed for salvation," and of their "consequent rebellion against their Almighty Lawgiver and Judge," to have known that a public recognition of the validity of their ministry and an

\* Bishop Hobart's Companion to the Altar.

interchange of public service could not be allowed by the lofty successors of the apostles.

And we must confess that we were amused at the simplicity of our good brother in dreaming, after the experience he has had of the dividing spirit of the episcopalian church in the United States, though a voluntary and unendowed community, that the adherents and advocates of the endowed and ennobled hierarchy of England could stoop to fraternize with the "unauthorized ministers" of "atheistical America."

It may be well enough for a clergyman "with Christian condescension," occasionally to accept an invitation to speak at the meeting of the London Missionary Society, and to receive the generous applause of liberal and warm-hearted Dissenters, but "ecclesiastical etiquette" will not permit that any "pretending to holy orders," should advocate the cause of episcopalian missions. Church authority must be upheld, come what may of "the communion of saints."

*Excitement to extraordinary Contributions at the Missionary Meeting.*

"The Rev. Mr. Knill, late of St. Petersburg, and now a most successful agent of the London Missionary Society, succeeded me, and was received with the most lively enthusiasm by the assembly. There is something in the countenance and personal appearance of Mr. Knill that is strikingly interesting—something that carries conviction to every one that he is a man of great simplicity and godly sincerity. His speech was, like himself, plain and straight-forward, and produced a manifest effect upon the audience. In compliance with his suggestion, a subscription was opened on the spot, for a special effort to send the gospel to China. Within a few minutes about £500 sterling was collected, some in gold, some in bank-notes, and more in promissory payments on scraps of paper handed up to the platform with the amount subscribed, prefixed with the three vowels, I. O. U. (I owe you) and endorsed with the name

of the subscriber. The propriety of this method of raising money, which it was stated was not uncommon at Missionary Meetings in Manchester and other places, was, in the opinion of many judicious individuals, very questionable, and I think will not be repeated. I confess, the influence on my own mind was not favourable. It tended to lessen the effect produced by the preceding exercise, and to convert into a mere pecuniary transaction the business of the meeting, which ought to have a higher and nobler object. The unhappy influence of the measure was apparent in the unsuccessful attempt of the Rev. Mr. Williams, of the South Sea Mission, who was the last speaker, to regain the attention and interest the feelings of the audience."

We cordially concur in the regret expressed by Dr. Codman respecting that occurrence, and feel that we cannot do better than cite the just and candid strictures of the eloquent author of *Mammon* upon similar scenes.

"Is there nothing questionable in the way in which money is raised on those occasions? nothing of a worldly mechanism for raising benevolence to the giving point? nothing of the anxiety of a pecuniary advantage felt by those most deeply interested at the commencement of a Meeting; and, as the pecuniary experiment proceeds, is not that anxiety increased as to how the speculation will succeed? Are there not occasions when our platforms exhibit a scene too much resembling a bidding for notice? The writer feels that he is treading on delicate ground; nor has he advanced thus far on without trembling. He is fully aware that many of these scenes to which he alludes, have originated spontaneously, unexpectedly, and from pure Christian impulse. Would that the number of such were increased. He does not forget that some of the agents of benevolence who are most active in promoting a repetition of such scenes, are among the excellent of the earth. He bears in mind, too, that among those whose names are proclaimed as donors on such occasions, are some whom it is a privilege to know; men who give privately as well as publicly; whose ordinary charity is single-handed. And he feels convinced that the ruling motive of all is to enlarge the sphere of Christian beneficence to the glory of the grace of God. Nor can he be insensible to the unkind construction to which these re-

marks, however humbly submitted, are liable to expose him, or the avidity with which the captious and the covetous will seize and turn them to their own unhallowed account; or to the force of the plea that the best things are open to abuse, and that it is easy to raise objections against the purest methods and means of benevolence. Still, however, he feels himself justified in respectfully submitting to the Christian consideration of those most deeply concerned in the subject, whether our anxiety for the attainment of the glorious end has left us sufficiently jealous for the purity of the means, whether some of these means do not call for reconsideration; whether they do not too directly appeal to motives which the gospel discountenances and disowns; and whether they rely sufficiently on the power of Christian appeal to Christian principle; whether, in fine, the mechanical spirit of the age is not beginning to influence the supply of our funds, to the injury of the spirit of genuine benevolence."

The Doctor adverts a second time to the alleged neglect of the Temperance Society, by the ministers of the Congregational churches, in the following terms:

*Temperance Society Meeting.*

"I confess I was much disappointed in not seeing more of my dissenting brethren present at this important anniversary. Why they should absent themselves from a meeting that ought to be strictly national and impartial, I could not divine. I heard some of their names mentioned in the list of the Society's committee, but I looked in vain for them on the platform. There are some honourable exceptions to the indifference that seems to pervade the Dissenting community on this subject. The Rev. Dr. John Pye Smith has from the beginning taken a lively interest in the temperance cause, and by his elevated station and distinguished character, much good may be expected from the noble stand he has taken in favour of total abstinence. Still as a body, the members of the Congregational Union, I regret, are behind their brethren in the Establishment, in their efforts to promote this philanthropic and benevolent cause.

"Much good might be done by their combined energies, in framing resolutions at their annual meetings, and by recommending the formation of Temperance Societies in all their congregations. It is sincerely to be hoped that

this important subject will engage their attention at their future meetings; and that, as they are forward in other good works, they will not be backward in this labour of love. These hints, if they should ever meet their eye, will, I doubt not, be received as they are intended to be given, in the spirit of Christian and fraternal love.

"There is a practice prevalent in England, which gave me much pain, and I hope never to see introduced on similar occasions in America. It is that of the free use of stimulating liquors at their public meetings. On a table on the platform are placed decanters of wine, large glasses of which are handed to the speakers and others, sometimes, though not always diluted with water. It is considered, though very erroneously, a necessary refreshment. Another custom, which strikes an American with great surprise, is the habit of offering similar refreshment to the preacher, immediately after he comes down from the pulpit. This practice, I regret to say, is almost universal. I took the liberty, frequently, to remonstrate with my English brethren on the impropriety and inconsistency of these customs. They had thought them necessary and proper; but I am persuaded they will be open to conviction, and be induced to relinquish them. These customs, which now strike an American so unfavourably, it ought to be remembered, might have been viewed by him with indifference, a few years since. We are in advance of our English brethren, on the subject of temperance, while on many other subjects they are in advance of us. Twenty years ago an English traveller might have noticed on the side-boards of his American friends, (not excepting the ministers of the gospel,) bottles of brandy, or gin, or Jamaica spirits, with the sugar bowl and pitcher of hot water, and been very cordially invited to partake of the refreshment. Such customs are gone by, we trust, for ever; and we hope and confidently believe, that the practices here adverted to as now prevailing in England, will soon follow them, and be numbered among the things that have ceased to be."

We can assure our amiable brother that we receive these remarks in the spirit by which they have been dictated, and are ready to give to the question all that attention which the importance of the subject demands.

In this Magazine for August,

(page 469,) it has been stated that there are a greater number of our body united to the Temperance Society than is generally supposed, and we will add, that many more would have long ago given in their adherence to it, had not the advocates of "*Tee-totalism*" occasioned a re-action in many minds by their extreme opinions.

To banish "the fruit of the vine" from the table of the Lord, and to forbid "such as be faint" to drink of it, appears to many so contrary to reason and scripture, that they stand aloof from operations which terminate in such conclusions.

The use of wine as a stimulant, preparatory to any sacred service, is, in our judgment, like kindling strange fire for the altars of God; but we must own that we do not see the moral evil of a man relieving the exhaustion which public speaking has occasioned by the use of wine. On physical grounds it may be, however, expedient to employ a less exciting beverage, but we are not prepared to submit to censure for the temperate use of that which we regard to be one of the choice blessings of a beneficent Creator.

As to the absence of Dissenting speakers from the platform of the Temperance Society, we venture to affirm that its committee can obtain the assistance of our best ministers, if it be previously sought, but he must be a bold man or a very ready speaker, who would allow himself to be called upon *instantly*, to address an audience in Exeter Hall.

Dr. Reed, in his "Narrative of a Visit," &c. has some remarks upon American preaching, in which he has expressed his conviction, that the practice of reading their sermons, which almost universally prevails amongst the Congregational Ministers of

N. S. NO. 142.

New England; is "undoubtedly prejudicial to the interests of the people." Upon this subject good Dr. Codman offers the following remarks.

*Extemporary or written Discourses.*

"The next day was the sabbath, and I preached for Dr. Reed in the morning. This chapel, which is a modern one, is large and commodious, and remarkably well attended. The construction of this, and similar places of worship in England, is admirably well adapted for the accommodation both of the preacher and the hearers. The pulpit, which will hold only one, and not an association of ministers like some of the pulpits in New England, is so placed as to afford the speaker the opportunity of looking all the congregation in the eye, which is of great advantage to the preacher, who depends not upon a written sermon, but upon his own recollection, and the excitement of the occasion for producing an effect upon the audience. It is almost the universal custom, for Dissenting ministers of the independent denomination in England, to preach without notes (that is, without reading, for many of them use short notes like a lawyer's brief.) There is certainly much to be said in favour of this practice. It is, without doubt, a more popular method of preaching, than the habit of reading sermons, as those preachers are most followed who adopt it. It tends to give the speaker self-possession, and to lead him to cultivate the habit of extemporaneous speaking, which is of no small importance in this day of platform declamation and field preaching. It may also give the minister more time to attend to the cultivation of his mind, and general study, although the fact, that the time thus redeemed is generally thus improved, is very questionable. I have been inclined to think that the practice of writing sermons, which prevails among the educated clergy of the United States, instead of weakening the intellectual power, and lessening the general stock of knowledge and information, by occupying so great a portion of time, has a direct tendency to strengthen the intellect, to encourage habits of study, and to counteract that propensity to indolence and inactivity so natural to the human mind; and although I have the greatest respect for the independent Dissenting ministers of England, and am not conscious of an overweening and undue partiality for my own denomination in the United States,—I cannot but think, that those ministers in America who are in

4 K



the habit of writing and reading their sermons, would not suffer in comparison both as to their classical and scientific attainments, their theological learning and their general usefulness, with their more ready and fervent brethren in the father land. Nor can I believe with my esteemed and beloved brother, Dr. Reed, in his remarks on this subject, in his narrative, that this practice is undoubtedly prejudicial to the interests of the people. So far as my knowledge extends, there is no people better informed on the subject of religion, and more unexceptionable in their piety and in their morals, than the people of New England and Scotland, in both which countries the habit of writing sermons very generally prevails. The sermons which they hear, and which have an influence upon their character, as a people, may be less animated and perhaps less eloquent, than those among the English Dissenters; but they are more systematic, more doctrinal, and more instructive. Both methods, however, have their advantages, and happy is the preacher, who can combine them in his pulpit instructions."

We frankly concede to our American brethren all the scholastic advantages which their superior collegiate system supplies, and we deplore that the exclusiveness of a dominant church, deprives our gifted youth of the advantages which our national Universities afford. Still we must confess, that we do not think our American brethren have made the best use of their many advantages for the pulpit; and we attribute their dyspeptic ailments and their

pulpit languor, to the toilsome practice of writing and reading at length their religious discourses. As, however, on this subject we are judges in our own case, we will avail ourselves of the opinion of the Rev. Robert Hall, whose literary and ministerial reputation stands in just esteem with the American churches.

"I have no doubt, that the extemporaneous mode of preaching is the best; by which I am far from intending the neglect of previous study, but the practice of delivering sermons with little or no immediate use of notes. That it possesses a superior power of keeping up attention and exciting an impression, can scarcely be doubted; and all that can be said on the other side is, that it is unfavourable to accuracy. But why should sermons be more elaborately exact in point of composition, than the speeches in Parliament, or at the Bar—or the force and pathos naturally attendant on the extempore mode of speaking, be excluded only from the inculcation of divine truth; that truth which we are enjoined by the highest example and authority, not to attempt to combine with excellency of speech or of wisdom."

We shall complete our notice of Dr. Codman's report in our next.

#### ON THE CHARACTER, ORIGIN, AND DESIGN OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.

(Continued from page 299.)

BEFORE finally closing the testimony of the early Christian writers concerning the four gospels, that given by Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia in Cilicia, a learned contemporary of Jerome, being at once concise and interesting, may here be subjoined.

Theodore was a man of respectable family, and probably a native of Antioch. He is supposed to have been ordained bishop about the year 392, and to have died about 429, after holding the sacred office thirty-six years. The early ecclesiastical historians extol his ta-



lents and attainments, both in biblical and in general literature, and Theodoret styles him the doctor of the whole church. He highly distinguished himself as a preacher, and as a commentator on most of the books of Scripture, besides writing various treatises on doctrinal subjects, and in refutation of heresies. The greater part of his works is unfortunately lost, but the following valuable fragment has been preserved by Corderius, and republished by Mill, in his well-known edition of the Greek Testament.

"After the Lord's ascension to heaven," says Theodore, "the disciples staid a good while at Jerusalem, visiting the cities in its neighbourhood, preaching chiefly to the Jews; until the great Paul, called by the divine grace, was appointed to preach the gospel to the Gentiles openly. And, in process of time, divine providence, not allowing them to be confined to any one part of the earth, made way for conducting them to remote countries. Peter went to Rome, others elsewhere. John, in particular, took up his abode at Ephesus, visiting however at seasons the several parts of Asia, and doing much good to the people of that country by his discourses. About this time, the other evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke published their gospels, which were soon spread all over the world, and were received by all the faithful in general with great regard. Nevertheless, the Christians of Asia, having a great opinion of the abilities and faithfulness of John, and considering that he had been with Jesus from the beginning, even before Matthew, and that he had been greatly favoured by the Lord, brought to him the other books of the gospels, desiring to know his opinion concerning them. And he

declared his approbation of them, saying that what they had written was agreeable to truth; but that some miracles, which might be of great use if recorded, were omitted. He said, moreover, that, whereas they had written of the coming of Christ in the flesh, it was fit that the things concerning his divinity also should be recorded. The brethren, thereupon, earnestly desired him to write those things which he esteemed needful to be known, and which he saw to have been omitted by the rest; with which request he complied, and he was induced to begin immediately with the doctrine of Christ's deity, after which he proceeded to the account of the things said and done by the Lord in the flesh."

The principal statements of early Christian authors concerning the four gospels having now been detailed, their amount and value may be estimated as follows.

The churches, or religious societies, which by the force of truth, and the aid of miraculous powers, the apostles had planted in various parts of the world, became the depositaries of their doctrines and reports; and, in the discharge of this office, their number and diversity furnished an effectual security against errors and omissions. Owing to the vast extent of ministerial labour which, within a period comparatively short, the apostles were called to perform, they had little leisure for composition; but the exigencies of the times drew from them those invaluable narratives and epistles which chiefly constitute the volume of the New Testament, and which were accordingly written either by themselves, or by their disciples under their direction. The oral testimony of the apostles

\* Lardner's *Credibility*, vol. v. pp. 506—512.

respecting the actions and discourses of Christ, perpetually repeated in the course of their daily preaching, was already stamped with divine authority; and, in an age when prophetic endowments were in constant operation, it was easy for their chosen associates, Mark, and Luke, and still more so for the apostles themselves, to compile and publish such testimony without any sensible deterioration. On this subject, the remarkable facility with which modern missionaries recall the numerous and minute details of past events in which they take so deep an interest, and which they have such frequent occasion to repeat, furnishes an apt illustration. Like the oral instructions of the apostles, the Christian records thus composed were committed to the care of the contemporary churches, many of which continued long afterwards to flourish in uninterrupted succession. It is demonstrable that down to a late period the tradition of the primitive churches was in perfect unison with the Scriptures of the New Testament; but, by a natural and inevitable tendency, the former gradually became obscure and uncertain, and at length totally disappeared; while the latter remain to this day entire and unchanged, showing the immense superiority of written records over oral reports, and the wisdom of the divine procedure in preferring the former to the latter.

The most prominent facts concerning the composition of these Scriptures are incidentally mentioned in the writings of various bishops or presbyters of the ancient churches, which have been more or less perfectly preserved to the present time. With a conciseness exactly suited to the circumstances in which they were placed, the earliest of these writers,

Clement, Barnabas, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, chiefly intimate that such a volume, including the four gospels, then existed, was attributed to the apostles as its authors, and, in conjunction with the Old Testament, was regarded by Christians as the primary source of all religious instruction. This simple testimony, without the aid of large quotations, or minute descriptions, is sufficient for the purpose; since, if the existence of such a volume at that period is fairly established, its authenticity, and subsequent preservation without material change, may be inferred as necessary consequences.

With a degree of accuracy and particularity, equally appropriate at the epoch when they flourished, the next succession of Christian writers give a fuller and more descriptive account of the sacred books, as likewise of their authors, the parties to whom they were addressed, and the times, places, occasions, and languages in which they were written. On most of these points their testimony is unexceptionable, and conclusive. They had the best opportunities of information; and, writing under the eye of adversaries, as well as of the Christian Church, they had neither motive nor occasion to commit any material error. Respecting the more important particulars there could have been no difficulty in obtaining exact knowledge; for, although the evangelists were not ambitious of fame, they did not affect concealment, and their object would have been defeated had their names and qualifications been unknown, or uncertain. The churches planted or confirmed by the apostles possessed authentic copies of these writings from their first publication, and could not have been mistaken with regard to their origin, transmission, and estimation. Of these

churches most of the primitive fathers were pastors, or superintendents. Living in different times and places, and connected with different parties, their reports are often to a considerable degree independent, or at least strongly confirm those which preceded them. There is some variety among them as to value and authority. The earliest, including Papias, Justin Martyr, Hegesippus, Irenæus, Pantænus, Clement of Alexandria, and Polycrates, had the advantage of proximity in time, and of more original information. The latter, comprising Tertullian, Julius Africanus, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and Theodore, are distinguished for mature consideration, and extensive research. If, as is readily acknowledged, their taste and judgment are not always entitled to applause, their testimony on plain matters of fact within their cognizance is, in general, free from objection. If on one or two minor points their statements are doubtful, these exceptions are readily recognized by their discrepancy; while the particulars wherein they all either positively or negatively agree may be regarded as fully established.

These particulars are chiefly that the evangelists wrote under a kind of necessity, and evinced a becoming modesty and diffidence in appearing as authors, or in speaking of themselves; that there were only four canonical gospels, which were written by the venerable persons whose names they bear, among whom Luke is acknowledged as the author of the Acts, and John of the epistles ascribed to him, as likewise of the Apocalypse; that the gospels are essentially memoirs composed by the apostles, aided by the Holy Spirit, concerning the life and actions of Christ; and that they were universally and exclusively

received by the early Christians, as a genuine portion of Scripture, and as a principal auxiliary of public and private devotion.

That Matthew was one of the evangelists is distinctly stated by Papias, Irenæus, Pantænus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Julius Africanus, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and Theodore.—“Matthew,” says Papias, “wrote the [divine] oracles in the Hebrew tongue, and every one interpreted them as he was able.”—Irenæus, in like manner, declares;—“Matthew, among the Jews, wrote a gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel at Rome, and founding [or establishing] the church there.”—And, again, “The gospel according to Matthew was written to the Jews, for they earnestly desired a Messiah of the seed of David, and Matthew, having also the same desire to a yet greater degree, strove by all means to give them full satisfaction that Christ was of the seed of David; wherefore, he began with his genealogy, . . . . [and] relates his generation which is according to man.”—Pantænus is said by Eusebius and Jerome to have gone out as a preacher from Alexandria to India, where he found the gospel by Matthew in Hebrew, as it had been originally conveyed thither by the apostle Bartholomew, the first missionary to that remote country, and to have brought back with him a copy to Alexandria, written in Hebrew letters.—Clement mentions a tradition concerning the chronological order of the gospels, which he had received from presbyters of more ancient times, namely, that the gospels containing the genealogies, that is those by Matthew and Luke, were first written; and elsewhere remarks,—“In the gospel according to Mat-

thew, the genealogy from Abraham is brought down to Mary, the mother of the Lord."

Tertullian observes,—“ Among the apostles, John and Matthew [first] teach us the faith, among apostolical men, Luke and Mark refresh it;”—and states that genuine copies of these, and of the two other gospels, had been preserved in the apostolical churches from the time of their institution, and were authenticated by their unanimous testimony and tradition. In another place he remarks,—“ Matthew, the most faithful historian of the gospel, as being a companion of the Lord, for no other reason than that we might be informed of the origin of Christ according to the flesh, began in this manner; ‘The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.’—In attempting to explain the same genealogy, which he regards as exhibiting the natural course of descent, Julius Africanus observes;—“ For which reason neither is that genealogy destitute of authority which the evangelist Matthew rehearses, thus, ‘And Jacob begat Joseph.’—In defining the canon of the New Testament, Origen thus expresses himself;—“ As I have learned by tradition concerning the four gospels, which alone are received without dispute by the whole church of God under heaven. The first was written by Matthew, once a publican, afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, who delivered it to the Jewish believers, composed in the Hebrew language.”—He adds that, whilst many,—“ without the gift of the Holy Spirit, took upon them to write gospels, Matthew, and Mark, and John, and Luke did not take in hand to write, but, being full of the Holy Ghost, wrote gospels.”

“ Of all the disciples of our

Lord,” says Eusebius, “ Matthew and John only have left us any memoirs, who too, as we have been informed, were compelled to write by a kind of necessity. For Matthew, having first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other people, delivered to them in their own language the gospel according to him, by that writing supplying the want of his presence with those whom he was then leaving.”—And, again,—“ The apostle Matthew does not pretend to any honourable station in the former part of his life, but placeth himself among publicans, employed in heaping up money. This none of the other evangelists have mentioned, not his fellow disciple John, nor Luke, nor Mark. But Matthew is his own accuser, and dissembles not his former course of life.”—Like several of his predecessors, Jerome declares that only four evangelists were acknowledged by the church.—“ The first is Matthew, the publican, surnamed Levi, who wrote his gospel in Judea, in the Hebrew language, chiefly for the sake of the Jews that believed in Jesus, and did not join the shadow of the law with the truth of the gospel.”—In the opinion of Jerome,—“ the first living creature [in the vision of Ezekiel,] having the face of a man, denotes Matthew, who writes as of a man, beginning thus, ‘The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.’—In another part of his works he very distinctly repeats;—“ Matthew, called also Levi, of a publican made an apostle, first of all wrote a gospel in Judea, in the Hebrew language, and in Hebrew letters, for the sake of those of the circumcision who believed. Who afterwards translated it into Greek is uncertain. Moreover, the very

Hebrew [gospel] is in the library of Cæsarea, which was collected with great care by the martyr Pamphilus; and, with the leave of the Nazarenes who live at Beræa in Syria, and use that volume, I transcribed a copy."—Jerome further observes on this occasion that, in quotations from the Old Testament, Matthew follows the Hebrew original rather than the Septuagint version. Lastly, Theodore represents the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, to have

been published about the same time, previously to that of John, and after the general removal of the apostles from Palestine, where they had long remained, to various remote countries, Peter proceeding to Rome, John to Ephesus, and the others elsewhere. He adds that these gospels were soon diffused throughout the world, and were generally received by Christians with great respect.

W. S.

*London, Sept. 1836.*

#### THE DOCTRINE OF PROBATION BROUGHT TO THE TEST OF SCRIPTURE.

I REGRET that diversified circumstances have deprived me of that leisure which was necessary to reply to the recent communications which have appeared in this Magazine, on the doctrine of human probation. We have nothing to fear from inquiry and investigation. The subject is one which demands the gravest consideration, and is entitled to deeper examination than either censor appears to have bestowed upon it. We must address ourselves to the task with becoming humility, looking for divine illumination, and willing to embrace the conclusion which is most in harmony with the Scriptures of truth. Much as we admire the writings of Owen and Edwards, (and who that loves the Protestant faith does not admire them?) we have learned to call no man master. The "good old way" is not to be defined and determined by their dictum, or by the decision of any man. Our appeal must be "to the law and to the testimony." The great question, "What is faith?" can be settled by no inferior authority. If the probation of man be the doctrine of Scripture, we are bound to be-

lieve it. But if this cannot be established, we are not to be inconsiderately and rashly charged with being "in quest of novelty—the holders of crotchets—the pursuers after new lights." Names, however great, and antiquity, however venerable, ought to have no weight or influence in our present inquiry. Certain technicalities have obtained currency in our theological department, and we have adopted them, not from an enlightened conviction of their correctness, but because their correctness never happened to be disputed. A more correct analysis now compels us to prefer for the gothic phraseology of former times one that is more simple and intelligible. What the late eminent Dr. Brown did in the nomenclature of philosophy, remains to be done by some master-spirit in the nomenclature of theology. And when the technicalities of the schools are given up for the simple language of Scripture, immense benefit will accrue to our most sacred science, and the various sections of the Christian church approximate nearer to each other, not only in feeling and affection,

but also in sentiment and doctrine.

I admit with Mr. Hamilton that Christianity appeals in its infinite mercy to all; that it has the obligation of a law, as well as the grace of an amnesty; and that every man to whom the gospel comes is under its dispensation. But how does this affect the doctrine of probation? Does it establish it? On the contrary, it overthrows it. The gospel contemplates man as being in a state of condemnation; addresses him as condemned; and yet in this character proffers him pardon and everlasting life as a boon from his offended Maker. In this he enjoys "the grace of an amnesty." But the gospel possesses "the obligation of a law:" it *commands* men to believe on the penalty of eternal death. And is their obedience to be regarded as the object of divine commendation? Are they to be commended for laying down the weapons of their unholy warfare, and submitting to the sceptre of the Redeemer's love? Whether is the praise to be ascribed to the sinner for the faith he exercises, or to God for the grace he bestows? Can salvation be of grace, and yet its acceptance be viewed by the Deity as a meritorious act on the part of man? So much is at least implied in the doctrine of probation. The ground assumed by your correspondent P. is, "that the dispensation of mercy which succeeded the fall placed all men in a state of probation, not indeed in a state of trial, whether they would secure eternal life by *obedience*, but whether they would attain to it by *faith* in the promised Messiah." According to this hypothesis, faith is a meritorious act. "All men are placed in a state of trial, whether they will attain unto eternal life by faith:" consequently all men are

in a position to be either approved or condemned, according as they believe or do not believe. But how can a sinner be commended for his faith? Faith is the result of the Spirit's operations on the heart, and embraces eternal life as THE GIFT of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. There is, however, no merit in faith. It is not faith which avails him, but the transcendent objects on which his faith terminates; not his belief, but the things believed. If eternal life, then, be proffered as the boon of rich and unmerited mercy, is he, if his faith embrace it, to be commended by God for accepting it? Is a sinful, guilty, and condemned creature to receive the approbation of his offended Maker for submitting his heart to the very power which has conquered, or the grace which has transformed it? It is in the very nature of the gospel to humble the sinner, and exalt the Deity, to lay the creature in the dust, and exhibit God all in all; and can we suppose that the very first act of the mind in embracing its overtures should constitute the man an object of the divine commendation? It is not faith which recommends him to God, but the result of faith, an interest in Christ, and conformity to his image.

Again, If "all men are placed in a state of trial, whether they will attain to eternal life by faith," their probation terminates with the very first instance of wilful rejection, they immediately fall under the condemnation of heaven. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God." Is there then no more sacrifice for sin; or is the sinner introduced into another relation? Does the scheme of mercy, subsequent to every act



of unbelief and disobedience, remove the anathema of a despised and rejected gospel, and again place the condemned offender in a new state of trial? If men are in a state of trial for life by faith, it follows that by the very first act of unbelief and refusal, they for ever forfeit the proffered good. Their probation closes. They have, after being placed in circumstances to obtain divine mercy, rejected the only provision of infinite love through an appointed Mediator; are therefore chargeable with a sin which is unpardonable. They have put away from themselves the grace of heaven's last and best dispensation. And unless another remedial scheme be superadded, whose provision will atone for what otherwise is unpardonable, from the moment they deem eternal life unworthy of them, by its voluntary rejection, men are literally without hope. Is this the light in which Scripture exhibits the subject? While every message of the gospel which is neglected or despised, is "the savour of death unto death," still, till the sinner's expiring hour, we are warranted in holding out to his acceptance and enjoyment, a free, and full, and everlasting salvation. But this is incompatible with a state of probation: the very first instance of disobedience seals his condemnation. He has *wilfully* sinned in not obeying the gospel, and unless another and still more gracious amnesty be published in his favour, he is, in its greatest and heaviest extent, under the divine anathema, and the continuation of his existence in this world is wholly inexplicable.

Mr. P. attempts to draw a line of distinction between the *objects* to which probation has reference, and on this distinction rests the

N. S. NO. 142.

reality of the *fact* in the case of both believers and unbelievers. "There may be a probation or trial, whether a man will *become* a believer, as well as whether he will continue such. The one is the probation of a sinner; the other that of a Christian." But if the Gospel find men under the sentence of a righteous condemnation, and proffer eternal life as the gift of God through faith in the Redeemer's name, then their believing and accepting the overtures of divine grace, can no more be the *object* of God's commendation, than the act of the rebel in embracing the pardon of his sovereign, can be the *object* of the sovereign's approval. If the *object* then has no conceivable relation to probation, the *fact* must be given up. Probation implies an object of approval or disapproval. But viewing man as in a state of condemnation, whose salvation, from first to last, must be by grace, there is no sense in which he can be said to be a candidate for eternal life. The truth we hold to be, that every man to whom the Gospel comes, is placed under its dispensation; that its whole provision is pressed home by the most powerful motives, on his immediate acceptance; that he is thus placed within the influence of a saving agency; that the convictions and impressions of which he is sometimes the subject, if yielded to, are sufficient to lead to the possession and enjoyment of the great salvation. This is his condition; a condition which imposes on him an immutable obligation to repent and believe; and yet if he obtain redemption, he is saved by grace, *through faith*, and that not of himself, it is the gift of God. It is not of faith: it is not as the reward of faith, for then boasting could not be excluded. It is wholly of grace,

4 L



that while the sinner is humbled, God may be glorified, and receive the undivided and eternal honour.

It had quite escaped my memory, that my revered and highly esteemed friend Dr. Wardlaw had, in his inestimable volume of sermons, such a passage as that quoted by our mutual censor. On perusing it, I am persuaded, he considers that *in no sense* are sinners in a state of probation. It is impossible to misinterpret his language, or mistake his meaning. The whole passage stands thus:—"Whilst man, as a sinner, must be justified by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ alone; yet, when he *has* believed in Christ, he enters upon, and sustains a new relation. He becomes a professor of the faith of the Gospel, of reconciliation to God by the death of his Son, of subjection to the sceptre of the Redeemer's love. To Jesus, the new master, whose servant he declares himself, he must now 'stand or fall.' In this view, he and his professions of faith and love are *upon trial*. In *this sense*, his life is, truly and properly, a *state of probation*. The probation of sinners, as candidates for immortality, we utterly reject, as contradictory to the plainest testimonies of Scripture, and of common sense: but the probation of professed disciples of Christ, as candidates for the final acknowledgment by their Master, of the reality of their faith and love, we maintain as scriptural, consistent, and necessary." This is clear as a sunbeam. In no other sense can man be in a state of probation or trial: his probation begins with his redemption.

It is obvious, that Mr. Hamilton has either not considered the remarks which were advanced on the subject of prayer, or altogether misunderstood them. They did not,

even remotely, favour "the implication, that *unconverted men* are not themselves bound to this exercise as a duty." Prayer is the creature recognizing his relation to the Creator, and prostrate at his throne, giving to Him the homage of the heart. This is the position proper to every dependant being, suitable to his nature and moral relations. It is the duty of every creature to give to God the homage of his soul. It is an obligation from which no one is, or can be exempted. It is the duty of devils. It is the duty of man irrespective of any change which may take place in his moral condition and circumstances. To this exercise he is bound as a duty. But while it is his duty to pray, he has a prior duty to perform. His first duty is to *believe*. And it is to the practice of calling on unconverted men, as such, to *pray*, instead of calling on them to *believe* the Gospel, with a view to their possession and enjoyment of the blessings of divine grace, that we objected. There is not a single passage in the whole of the New Testament which favours the practice. The only text adduced is Acts viii. 22, in the case of Simon Magus. But even there, repentance precedes prayer. "Repent and pray." Before any service in which a sinner engages can be acceptable, he himself must be accepted in the Beloved. To be made accepted, he must first believe; and when once brought to believe, he will immediately pray—but not till then. It was after his conversion, it was said of Paul, "Behold he prayeth." And why should we so far deviate from the example of Christ and his apostles as to substitute one duty for another? If their uniform and invariable practice, in addressing the unconverted and ungodly, was

to call them to faith and repentance, why should we call them to pray? Prayer will always follow faith, but faith will not always result from a form of prayer. We would not say to any man, you must not pray. This would be assuming a power which belongs to no creature. But instead of entreating the unconverted, in public discourse, and in private conversation, to pray, I would rather urge upon the conscience, the immediate and indispensable duty of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. And in such a mode of instruction

I would challenge even Mr. Hamilton to prove any thing either false or pernicious; any thing either subtle, or licentious, or antinomian. I forgive the style and spirit in which he has written; but must yet remind him, that though endowed with a masculine mind, and able to employ "a masculine pen," he requires to think more clearly, and write more simply. The principles espoused, and the sentiments advanced, I confidently refer to the word of God—the only standard of final appeal.

THE REVIEWER.

#### REMARKS ON A RECENT PAPER UPON INFANT BAPTISM.

(To the Editor.)

I HAVE been much gratified in perusing the Essay by your correspondent "JOHN BULL," on "The profession requisite to Infant Baptism," inserted in your Magazine for August. It discusses *that* point on the subject of Baptism, which has ever appeared to me the most difficult; nor do I remember ever having seen the view of the subject he adopts, (and in which I substantially agree with him,) more clearly or forcibly exhibited. The point in which that Essay appears to me principally defective is in its failing to meet the most forcible of those objections which would be urged by an "individual, arguing in support of a different view of the subject." One chief object of my present communication is to suggest, that as J. B. has plainly studied the subject with some attention, it would greatly increase the value of his former paper, if he would follow it by another, particularly embracing the object I have named. He has most probably read Dr. Wardlaw's "Dissertation on the Scriptural autho-

riety, nature, and uses of Infant Baptism," or I should strongly recommend that part of it to his consideration, which alludes to this particular point, and which will be found to commence on page 191 of the second edition. The Doctor is a decided advocate for confining baptism strictly to believers and their children; "meaning of course, by the designation, such as we have reason at the time to acknowledge as believers." Though Dwight and others have defended the same views, Dr. W. appears to me in this, as in so many other cases, to have succeeded in placing the argument in a few words, in its most simple and forcible light.

The point to which I would especially invite the attention of your correspondent, is the desirableness of illustrating the principles on which the view of the subject he advocates, is to be harmonized with the evident agreement of baptism under the Christian, and circumcision under the Abrahamic constitution. Dr. W. argues that as the parents of all children entitled to circumcision were admitted

to the passover, or the ordinances, whatever they might be, which formed the outward distinction of the Jews;—so those children only should be received to baptism, whose parents are deemed eligible to partake of the Lord's supper, and share in all the privileges of the Christian church. Your limits will not allow me to quote the Doctor's words as illustrating and enforcing this argument; but I think I have fairly stated its leading design. I am by no means prepared to think this point does not admit of explanation, consistently with the views entertained by J. B.: but considering the importance of a right apprehension of the Abrahamic covenant, as bearing on Christian baptism, which comes in the place of circumcision, I cannot but think he would do well to express himself more fully on this point. One part of the Essay does indeed incidentally touch on it; but in terms which, I own, make me still more desirous of some further explanation. After observing that all which the Apostles required of heads of families, before admitting themselves and households to baptism, was an expressed "willingness to be instructed in the gospel," he adds: "On these same terms also proselytes, and their infants, were admitted to the Jewish church by circumcision." I know not on what authority this statement is made; but so far as my means of information go, there would seem to have been a longer delay, and a more strict course of probation connected with the reception of proselytes, than this brief account of the matter appears to imply. Calmet says, (8vo. edition art. Proselytes) "The Rabbins inform us, that before circumcision was administered to them, and they were admitted into the religion of

the Hebrews, they were examined about the motives of their conversion; whether the change were voluntary or whether it proceeded from interest, fear, ambition, &c." He afterwards adds: "When the proselyte had been well instructed they gave him circumcision." With this the account given by Horne in his *Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures*, and Lewis in his *Antiquities of the Hebrew Republic* substantially agree. The chapter in the last-named work, on this subject, evidently conveys the idea that they were accustomed to go as far in their previous course of discipline and instruction as they thought safe, without endangering a loss of their expected convert by frightening him from his design. My object in these remarks, as will already have been perceived, is not to controvert the leading positions of J. B., but merely to suggest those points on which some additional explanation appears highly desirable.

Whatever probationary process was adopted in reference to the admission of proselytes to Judaism, we have certainly, as it appears to me, no evidence that the candidates for baptism were subjected by the apostles to any such preparatory discipline, but quite the reverse. Dr. Wardlaw indeed maintains that the apostles admitted to baptism, only on the same profession of faith which led them to receive individuals to the full privileges of Christian fellowship: and he appeals in confirmation to the fact, that "the three thousand who, on the day of Pentecost, gladly received Peter's word, were baptized; and the same day were added to the church." It should be remarked, that the particular phrase "to the church" is Dr. Wardlaw's own: the authorized version has it "there were added

unto them." The alteration was probably occasioned entirely by inadvertence, but it is not an important one. I am not, however, prepared to deny the fact that these persons were very speedily, if not at once, admitted to all the privileges of Christian fellowship. But then I conceive they were so, not because the profession necessary for baptism is such as always to involve a title to Christian fellowship in general, but because, in the then persecuted state of the church, even that profession was deemed a decidedly hopeful evidence of a changed state of heart. In the present altered state of the church, such a profession can no longer be regarded as affording any substantial evidence of real conversion. While therefore, like the apostles, we administer baptism to those who are desirous of being instructed in the gospel—of being admitted by the initiatory rite, as hearers to the school of Christ, we are necessarily obliged to wait till more decided evidence is afforded of real personal piety, before receiving them to those privileges which pertain exclusively to the true believer.

In connection with these views of Christian baptism, I have often thought the enquiry worthy of consideration, whether there has not been too wide a deviation from apostolic practice, as to the reception of persons to this rite, in connection with our Missionary efforts. We often read of "Candidates for Baptism," as descriptive of persons who have been kept, if I mistake not, for a considerable time after expressing a desire to be baptized, in order that the strength and stability of their impressions might be tried, before their wish was complied with. What sanction does the conduct of the apostles

afford for this? Missionaries indeed at present are not circumstanced exactly as the apostles were.—They have no miraculous facilities for overcoming the difficulties that must arise from imperfect acquaintance with the language, manners, &c. of those among whom they labour; sufficient time and care must therefore on their part be taken, to assure themselves that a native applicant clearly understands what is meant by Baptism, as an ordinance by which he expresses his desire to be introduced as a learner to the school of Christ, and virtually brings himself under obligation, diligently to attend the means of instruction. But when once this seems to be correctly understood, does there appear solid scriptural ground for delaying to comply with his wish? Is not Baptism to be viewed as a means of discipling the nations? Would not the very fact of an individual having openly undergone that rite, have a direct tendency, under the divine blessing, to render him more constant and steadfast in prosecuting his enquiries? Would it not afford a most powerful argument to the Missionary, in pressing home divine truth upon the conscience? In case of such an one relapsing into a state of indifference, (and many such cases must be looked for,) is there not the probability that the fact of his baptism, with the desires he had then expressed, might recur to his remembrance, even when cut off perhaps for a time from all intercourse with any missionary, and, sent home to the heart by a divine power, recur with a force that might lead to the happiest results? Does it not seem too a natural supposition, that the earlier and more extended practice of Baptism, would excite attention and awaken a spirit of enquiry

among those who had never yet concerned themselves in the instructions of the Missionary, and thus the more readily induce them to do so? I have put these points in the form of enquiries, not so much because I feel myself doubtful of their correctness and force; but because, in no degree conversant from experience with the actual working of any means employed for the instruction of the Heathen, I hesitate in even *appearing* to censure the measures which holy and devoted brethren have adopted, as the result, I doubt not, of deliberate and prayerful consideration.

It will perhaps be suggested as setting aside the force of the above enquiries, that the injury which would in all probability result, under so ready an admission to baptism from the instability of those who might be received to it, would be of the most fatal character. In reply to this it need only be asked, would such a practice be sustained by scripture and

apostolic example? If so, let it be adopted, fearless of all consequences, and leaving, as we safely may, the result with Him whose law we consider ourselves obeying. On the other hand, let but the unscriptural character of these suggestions be pointed out, and the writer would be the last individual to attempt defending them, on any doubtful conjecture as to their proposed expediency.

These remarks have assumed a form and extended to a length I was far from contemplating in commencing them. If they shall be deemed of any value in drawing further attention to a point which has often struck me as one of great importance, or be the means of eliciting from John Bull, or any other of your intelligent correspondents, a still farther elucidation of the interesting subject, the end for which they have been hastily thrown together will be fully answered.

H. B.

*Clattering.*

#### THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER'S STRICTURES ON THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

THERE was a time when the temperate language and catholic spirit of the *Christian Observer* made it an acceptable periodical to many Dissenters. Its character has of late, however, strangely altered; and by its almost systematic neglect of every book, however valuable, that is written by a Dissenter, and its frequent efforts to put the worse construction upon every thing that relates to the dissenting communities, there is too much reason to fear that the opinions of its editor have undergone a remarkable change, or that he is pandering to the passions of his

episcopalian readers at the expense of truth, peace, and charity.

The last number of that journal supplies more than one illustration of this remark, but my present object is to invite your attention to the following strictures on "The Congregational Union."

"The Independents, or Congregationalists, have lately shown, that with all their abstract preference for a rope of sand above a well-cemented system of ecclesiastical regimen, they find that some agglutination is desirable; and accordingly, though reprobating presbyteries, synods, and, above all,

episcopal jurisdiction, they have invented a new species of machinery, under the name of "The Congregational Union of England and Wales;" which has regular Conferences in London, and holds an "Annual Assembly," or Synod—or, to use its own ecclesiastical word, "Convocation!" ("our Great Convocation!")—from which it issues addresses "to the ministers and churches of the same faith and order throughout the empire;" advising, exhorting, instructing, or rebuking, as it judges fit, upon the most minute matters of doctrine and discipline. What is this but a virtual abandonment of the independent principle? what is it but the formation of an ecclesiastical oecumenical council? for, though no authority is claimed, and the advice and remonstrances of the "Convocation" profess to be fraternal, not judicial, yet the very issuing of such an address by such a body is an assumption of jurisdiction; and it implies, contrary to the first law of the Independent system, that it is not desirable that each congregation should be abandoned altogether to its own wisdom and discretion. The dominion of the Church of Rome itself grew up by steps as specious, and usurpations at first as unalarming; nay, to this hour the Sovereign Pontiff professes to be only the servant of the servants of God. A few leaders and delegates meet in a metropolis; they consult together, and issue encyclical letters to their provincial brethren: after a time their power is sensibly felt; enthralment commences, and independence ceases: for though its name may continue a little longer, the influence of the Convocation will begin to press increasingly, even to the remotest members: to resist its wishes will become impracticable; to rebel, would be to

incur a weight of odium far too heavy for an individual or an isolated society to sustain: the societies will therefore no longer be isolated, but become planets revolving round a central orb: in a word, the Congregational system will merge into a system resembling that of the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Quakers, or some yet stricter rule. This may be a very good issue; and, for ourselves, we highly approve of order, and union, and government, and subordination, and episcopal charges; but these things are not Congregationalism. If we were Congregationalists we should look with a very jealous eye at a central convocation in London, with delegates from almost every county in England, consulting together in ecclesiastical conclave, and issuing their addresses to their brethren throughout the land, upon a variety of the most important points of faith and practice, even to the minutest matters touching the choice and support of pastors, the internal affairs of churches, and the celebration of Divine Ordinances. We should deliberately reject the proffered interference, and send back the addresses of the metropolitan convocation unopened.—We say not this as meaning that the addresses are not very excellent, and such as it would be well if every "church and congregation" would follow; but we speak of the principle; and we maintain that the invention of this new machinery is a death-blow to congregational independence, and a proof that those who adopt that system feel that it cannot be fully and fairly acted upon, when congregations become numerous and scattered, without danger of general dislocation."

No Congregational Dissenter can read this paragraph without detecting the mischievous purpose



for which it was written; the *animus* of the article is to excite jealousies and to perpetuate isolation amongst the Congregational Churches. The principles of our churches are disliked, and the active energies of their members are dreaded, and consequently the Editor of the Christian Observer attempts to raise against this important association of the Congregational body, a cry of apostacy and of ecclesiastical usurpation and incipient popery! Now it is to be regretted that he did not better inform himself respecting the opinions of the Congregational Churches, before he stated that it is a first principle, "that such church should be abandoned to its own wisdom and discretion." This vulgar version of their principles is refuted by the writings of their ablest divines, and by many facts of their denominational history.

The learned Henry Ainsworth one of the earliest and best of our ministers, in his book entitled "*The Communion of Saints*," has a chapter "*Of the communion that one church hath with another*," in which he says, "from these few examples compared with the former general duties of all Christians, may appear how churches owe help, comfort, and refreshing one to another, as they have need and ability, yet avoiding both ambition and confusion. *For although we may advise, exhort, warn, reprove, &c.* so far as Christian love and power extendeth: yet find we no authority committed to one congregation over another for excommunicating the same, as every church hath over its own members."

Dr. John Owen, in his *True Nature of a Gospel Church*, has a chapter of more than thirty pages of the *Communion of Churches*, in which he asserts, "that the church that confines its duty unto the acts

of its own assemblies, cuts itself off from the external communion of the Church catholic: nor will it be safe for any man to commit the conduct of his soul to such a church."

Isaac Chauncey, in his *Divine Institution of Congregational Churches*, has also a chapter on the same subject, where he enumerates the things in which churches may communicate, and says,

"2. There is communion in *counsel and advice*; and such there was between the church of Jerusalem and that of Antioch." Perhaps the Editor of the Christian Observer may assert "This is not Congregationalism!"

Has that gentleman never heard of a meeting of the elders and messengers of the Congregational Churches in England, held at the Savoy Palace, London, September, 1658; when the ministers and messengers of about one hundred churches attended? Has he never seen "A declaration of the Faith and Church Order" which that Assembly put forth? He might have learned that its authors, Owen, Goodwin, Caryl, Greenhill, Nye and Bridge, thought that—

"In cases of difficulties or differences, either in point of doctrine or in administrations, wherein either the churches in general are concerned, or any one church, in their peace, union, and edification, or any member or members of any church are injured in, or by any proceeding in censures, not agreeable to truth and order: it is according to the mind of Christ, that many churches holding communion together, do by their messengers meet in a synod or council, to consider and give their advice in, or about that matter in difference, to be reported to all the churches concerned; howbeit these synods so assembled are not intrusted with any church power,



properly so called, or with any jurisdiction over the censures, either over any churches or persons, or to impose their determinations on the churches or officers."

Did that meeting or this quotation betray "an abstract preference for a rope of sand?"

When the English Presbyterian and Congregational ministers united in 1691, they published "The Heads of Agreement," to which they then assented. Had the Editor of the *Christian Observer* consulted that document, he would have found in Section IV. of *Communion of Churches*.—"1. We agree that particular churches ought not to walk so distinct and separate from each other, as not to have care and tenderness towards one another. But their pastors ought to have frequent meetings together, that by mutual advice, support, encouragement, and brotherly intercourse, they may strengthen the hearts and hands of each other in the Lord."—So that the desirableness of "some agglutination" is not so recent a discovery amongst the Congregational Churches as the Editor has imagined.

Were it necessary further to prosecute these inquiries, I might quote the constitution of the Congregational Churches of New England, as described in *The Platform of Church Discipline*, published by a Synod assembled at Cambridge, September 30, 1648, chapters 15, 16, and from other documents of the American congregationalists, all testifying that a union of churches and of associations is with them no "new species of machinery," but was adopted, not "invented," almost two centuries ago, and continues in successful operation still.

It is, however, expedient that I should state that the Independent churches of Scotland, who are characterized by a high regard for

N. S. No. 142.

their ecclesiastical privileges, have had in operation amongst them, for twenty-four years, "The Congregational Union of Scotland," without dreaming "that their new machinery is a death-blow to Congregational independence." Indeed it has so happened, that life and vigour, love and zeal, with a large accession of numbers and usefulness, have followed their organized efforts. Surely the editor of the *Christian Observer* is not afraid lest similar advantages should result from the same measure to the Congregational Churches of England and Wales! I trust that this attack upon "the Union," together with that made some time ago in the *British Magazine*, will convince our brethren who have not yet joined that body, that its importance is at least understood by our opponents, and that unless some New Testament principle is compromised in the constitution of that General Association, they ought without delay to give in their adherence to it. The lawfulness of such a union, it may be seen, was never doubted by the fathers of our churches; and it is, I think, only to be regretted, that their principles have not been practically applied to our denomination long ago.

I must again complain of the uncandid manner in which this subject has been treated by the Editor of the *Observer*. If, as he says, "he highly approves of order and union and government," &c.—and considers that our churches have been deficient in these matters, would it not have been more christian-like to have referred to it without sneers, sarcasms, and prognostications?—Is there nothing, I would ask, upon which a good mind may reflect with pleasure, that "a declaration of faith," &c. has been adopted by our Union, which owns all the great fundamental doctrines

4 M

of the Gospel, as taught by the fathers of the Reformation? Is there nothing in the peaceful, holy, catholic, and manly sentiments of the three Annual Addresses that have been published, to command respect and to excite regard? Can the Editor of the Observer find no pleasure in seeing our churches using The Congregational Hymn Book, in which "the productions of Bishops Ken and Heber, of Wesley and Toplady, of Doddridge and Hart, Cowper and Newton, Fawcett and Beddome—episcopalian clergymen, Moravians, Wesleyan Methodists, Independents, and Baptists," all harmoniously combine, exhibiting "the essential indestructible unity of the Church of Christ," and of the unison of

sentiment which, notwithstanding our unhappy ecclesiastical differences, characterizes the *devotional creed* of all denominations "holding THE HEAD?" O, it is very, very lamentable to see such a man dragged by the prejudices, fears, and interests of his half frantic party, from the truly Christian station he once occupied, to minister to the weakest and worst emotions of our nature! Far better would it be, that he should forego the emolument which such patrons afford, than secure it by the sacrifice of that Christian charity, without which, though he "speak with the tongues of men and of angels," he is as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

Z. Z.

## POETRY.

### MEMORIAL VERSES BY JAMES MONTGOMERY, ESQ.

Inscribed to the Memory of the Rev. Thomas Rawson Taylor, late Classical Tutor at Airedale College, Yorkshire, who departed this life on March 7th, 1835, in the twenty-eighth year of his age.

MILLIONS of eyes have wept o'er frames  
Once living, beautiful and young.  
Now dust and ashes, and their names  
Extinct on earth, because unsung;  
But song itself hath but its day,  
Like the swan's note—a dying lay.

A dying lay I would rehearse,  
In memory of one whose breath  
Poured forth a strain of such sweet verse,  
As might have borne away from death  
The trophy of a sister's name,  
—Winning at once, and giving fame.

But all is mortal here;—that song  
Pass'd like the breeze, which steals from  
flowers  
Their fragrance, yet repays the wrong  
With dew-drops shaken down in showers;  
Ah! like those flowers with dew-drops  
fed,  
They sprang, they blossom'd, they are  
dead.

The Poet (spared a little while,)  
Followed the sister all too soon;  
The hectic rose that flushed his smile  
Grew pale, and withered long ere noon;  
In life's exulting prime, he gave  
What death demanded, to the grave.

But that which death nor grave could  
seize  
His soul—into his Saviour's hands,  
(Who, by the cross's agonies,  
Redeemed a people from all lands.)  
He yielded, till "that day"\* to keep:  
And then, like Stephen, fell asleep.

"That day" will come; meanwhile, weep  
not,  
O ye that loved him, and yet more  
Love him for grief that "he is not;"  
—Rather with joy let eyes run o'er,  
And warm hearts hope his face to see,  
Where 'tis for ever "good to be."

\* 2 Tim. i. 12.

W. S. Matthews' *Memoirs and Select Remains of the Rev. T. R. Taylor*, &c.

## REVIEW OF BOOKS.

*Mammon; or, Covetousness the Sin of the Christian Church. By the Rev. John Harris, Author of the "Great Teacher."* Sixth Thousand. pp. xvi. 311. Ward and Co.

AMONG the triumphs of money, it would be difficult to find one more complete than that which it has achieved in the production of this volume. A prize of a hundred guineas has set in motion more than a hundred pens. One hundred and forty-three essays on Covetousness have sprung into being at the voice of gold. We charge not the liberal donor with inconsistency, nor the competitors with unhallowed motive. It is quite possible that higher principles may have stimulated every bosom; or that the desire of money itself may have been, in given circumstances, both legitimate and laudable. But the fact remains, that the means skilfully selected by Dr. Conquest, as best adapted to accomplish his noble object, has been completely successful in the excitement of vigorous and extensive competition. Now, if any being can be hopefully assaulted only through itself, how inevitable is our impression of its power! Rome, in its majesty, can be subjugated by Romans alone. Samson himself must direct the hand that despoils him of his strength. And wealth, it seems, can never lose its empire, without the instrumentality of its own suicidal energy.

But will not the author of the successful treatise, when thus *apparently* prompted, be suspected of a merely professional fervour? and will not this suspicion erect in the mind of the reader, a bulwark proof against all the artillery of

heaven? Such a feeling we have already seen, with reference to the present Essay, brightening the self-complacent smile of avarice. Nor do we perceive how it is to be *annihilated*, unless the moral dignity of the writer should be equal to his intellectual superiority; unless he should be found willing to prove himself the first convert to his own doctrines. That this is the fact we rejoice to know; the hardly-earned and well-deserved premium has been already consecrated to God.

But if the writer has escaped from one foe, another awaits him. Minds of his order are far more exposed to the temptations of ambition than of avarice. And to some authors in his circumstances, preferred by wisdom and piety to a host of competitors, and rapidly exciting the more stimulating meed of popular approbation, we should feel compelled, in christian fidelity, to say—"Recollect, there are other demons besides the fiend you have assailed. There is one of loftier bearing and of haughtier brow. Beware! Satan is mightier than Mammon." But in the present instance we utter not our warnings, assured that we are dealing with an order of piety which, recognising the divine goodness in the existence of mental superiority, and the divine aid in every instance of its prosperous application; acutely feeling the spirit's deficiency in grateful love, and tracing to a heavenly source this very penitence; is necessarily conscious of an abasement, proportioned to its successes and its eminence.

But it is high time we should direct our attention to the Essay itself. The title, brief and expressive, will strike most readers as happily selected ; and it is destined, we doubt not, to be remembered and repeated. The question might indeed be raised, as our author admits, whether covetousness can be correctly designated *the* sin of the Christian church. The position of Christianity with reference to the world, merely colonizing a globe which it ought to rule, doubtless proves that some sin, or sins, must have enervated its original power. Sloth, sensuality, cowardice, and perhaps other vices, might contend with covetousness for the supremacy ; but we believe the present writer has justly awarded the bad pre-eminence. Indeed, the nature of the enterprise divinely entrusted to the church, will prove how dependent its successful accomplishment must have been on a spirit of liberality. The final command of Christ and his subsequent intimations, whether providential or inspired, give to the whole scheme a missionary aspect. The world was not to be evangelized by the gradual assimilation of concentric circles of territory around Jerusalem : new and distant centres were to be created, whence, unlike the emanations of a physical influence, the Gospel was to radiate with power, *augmenting* in the ratio of its distance. But the robustness, and the daring, and the domestic freedom essential to the early and enterprising missionary, could not have been found in every convert, or in every minister. Hence the necessity for a selection of foreign agents, and, of course, for the adequate funds. There were required not merely Paul the apostle, but the Philippian Church, who "sent once and again" to his necessity ; not only the brethren

who for Christ's "name sake went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles," but Gaius, who brought "them forward on their journey after a godly sort." But when the age of apostolic zeal was past, and Mammon began to avenge himself on the church for the temporary defeat with which its youthful onset had disgraced him, and the degeneracy which Cyprian deplores had been matured, the change operated in two ways on the expansive power of the system : it prevented, personally, the development of the missionary spirit, and, relatively, fettered its activity, if by chance it existed. Few were willing to bear onwards the cross, and to conquer or die beneath its shadow ; and if such were found, few were disposed to tax themselves for their support. The enlistment was checked, the treasury was empty ; and the church, having ceased to conquer, began to retreat. So that the love of money is evidently sufficient to account for the present contraction of the Christian empire : and history assures us that this cause did pre-eminently exist. Neither sloth, nor sensuality, nor cowardice, was the epidemic malady of religion. Industry, self-denial, enterprise, were all in action ; but they were employed in gaining and in keeping wealth. They are still, with some splendid exceptions, thus engaged ; and Achan yet unnerves the host of Israel.

The style of the present volume is of the most interesting character. A reader with a good memory may indeed, occasionally, select the recurrence of a favourite phrase or illustration. But this is a trifle, one of the "*paucæ maculae*."

"Quas aut incuria fudit,  
Aut humana parum cavit natura."

As a whole, the language perspicuous, graphic, pointed, forcible,

exhibits an ease which is attainable, like good breeding, only by habit. Rarely have we seen expressions better adapted to convey sentiments which, though sufficiently embellished by literary research, and by scientific and classical allusion, are chiefly distinguished by a *vigour* which wields an argument, demolishes a sophism, or creates an image with equal facility. The materials, whensoever collected, have evidently been fused and cast in the writer's mind. His vivacity would be wit, were he not too serious; his acuteness, sarcasm, were he not too benevolent. His images are not paintings, but sculptures; and they are hewn out of the work, and, like the statue of Phidias on the shield of Minerva, incorporated and immovable. But all is subordinated to usefulness: the whole production, direct, practical, popular, catholic; reveals a mind that would willingly sacrifice elegance to impression, and is more anxious to secure improvement than to extort applause.

It is this moral character of the book which is to our minds its most fascinating aspect, and which renders our office one of tremulous responsibility. Produced under the influence of devotion, it is adapted to excite kindred emotions; nor is it easy to inhale its atmosphere of self-dedication, without feeling the pulsations of spiritual health. The mind becomes braced to some high purposes of benevolence; it grows willing, like the author, to abandon the optimism of the *religious conservatives*, and to aim at genuine reformation.—The writer is, in truth, a man of the movement; and the critic who would thwart his path must prepare to resist the impulse, not of genius merely, but of prophecy and of omnipotence.

The arrangement of the work is

simple, comprehensive, and connected. The first part treats of selfishness as the antagonist of the gospel; the second of covetousness—the principal form of selfishness—in its nature, forms, prevalence, (especially in Britain,) disguises, tests, evils, doom, and pleas; and the concluding portion explains and enforces Christian liberality.

The first section will show, that the author understands the importance of a stable basis, and recurs with ease to first principles.

"God is love:"—and the true theory of the universe is, that it is a vehicle or medium constructed expressly for the circulation and diffusion of his love. Full of blessedness himself, his goodness burst forth, at first, into a *celestial* creation, replenished with bright intelligences, invested with the high prerogative of approaching as near to the Fountain of excellence as created natures can, to derive their happiness immediately from himself, and to derive it to the full amount of their capacity for enjoyment.

"But heaven, with all its amplitude, was too confined for Infinite Love; he must enlarge the sphere of his beneficence; again his unconfined goodness overflowed, and this terrestrial creation appeared—an enlargement of heaven. On that occasion, however, he chose to diversify the form of his love in the production of man,—a creature whose happiness, though equally with that of angels derived from Himself, should reach him through more indirect and circuitous channels. By creating, at first, one common father of the species, he designed that each individual should feel himself allied to all the rest, and pledged to promote their happiness. And by rendering us necessary to each other's welfare, he sought to train us to an humble imitation of his own goodness, to teach us the divine art of benevolence—to find and fabricate our own happiness from the happiness of others.

"Now, if the former, the angelic creation, was meant to exemplify how much his creatures could *enjoy*, the latter was intended to show how much they could *impart*; for he meant every heart and every hand to be a consecrated channel for his love to flow in. Had his great idea been realized, the world would have exhibited the glorious spectacle of a whole race in family compact; clothed in a robe of happiness, with charity for a

girdle; feasting at a perpetual banquet of beneficence; hailing the accession of every new born member as the advent of an angel, an addition to their common fund of enjoyment; and finding greater blessedness than that of passively receiving happiness in exercising the godlike prerogative of imparting it;—a whole order of intelligent beings, having *one heart and one mind*; a heart beating in concert with heaven, and diffusing, with every pulse, life, and health, and joy, to the remotest members of the body. The mere outline of the scene, as sketched by God in paradise, called forth audible expressions of his divine complacency; on surveying it from the height of the excellent glory, he pronounced it *good*, and the light of his countenance fell full upon it."—pp. 3—5.

The four following sections show that sin, as selfishness, is the frustration of the divine plan; that all sin is selfishness; that the gospel, as a system of benevolence, is opposed to selfishness; and that selfishness, the sin of the world, has long since become the sin of the church. The sixth section depicts the forms which selfishness assumes in the church; and of these forms the writer gives portraiture which, if they do not prevent the slumbers of many a religionist, may well disturb his dreams. We select one of these.

"Nearly akin to this is, what, for the sake of convenience, may be denominated, *the selfishness of the pulpit*: that fearful spirit which presumes to limit what God meant to be universal—the overtures of redemption to a ruined world. Selfishness, indeed, in this repulsive form, is of comparatively limited existence; and, as if by a judicial arrangement of providence, it is commonly, in our day, associated with errors and tempers so unamiable, that its own nature forbids it to become general. It daringly undertakes to 'number Israel;' to determine not only that few will be saved, but who that few will be. Its ministers, faithful to their creed, stand before the cross, and hide it; lest men should see it who are not entitled or intended to behold it;—a danger which they jealously avoid, a responsibility they would tremble to incur. The gospel charters redemption to the world,—but they have heard that there are divine de-

crees; and until they can logically reconcile their views of the divine inflexibility with the universality of the divine compassion, the charter must stand over; and souls perish unwept; and the gospel of Christ, God's great gift, the adequate image of the infinitude of his love, be branded with the stigma of exclusiveness. Put the affairs of the kingdom of Christ into their hands,—and, under the affectation of a pious dread of contravening the sovereign purposes of God, or of forestalling his appointed time,—they would forthwith call home the agents of mercy in distant lands, break up the institutions, and stop the whole machinery, of Christian benevolence. In the midst of a famishing world, they would establish a monopoly of the bread of life; and, though assailed on all sides by the cries of a race in the pains of death, would not cease to exchange smiles radiant with self-complacency while continuing to cater to their own pampered appetites. 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' They know not that they are perverting that which was meant to be the destruction of selfishness, into its very aliment and nurse; they know not, that, next to the *destruction* of the gospel, they could not furnish Satan with a greater triumph than thus to silence its inviting voice, and to suppress the agencies of its disciples. It is to arrest the course of the angel having the everlasting gospel and flying through the midst of heaven, and to confine him to their own contracted horizon; to demonstrate that nothing is too monstrous to be apprehended from our nature when its selfish tendencies are the materials employed, since it can construct a system out of the gospel itself, whose most appropriate title would be, 'Christianity made selfishness.'"—pp. 36—38.

The author's definition of covetousness, in the second part, is as follows:

"Covetousness, denotes the state of a mind from which the Supreme God has been lost, labouring to replace him by some subordinate form of enjoyment. The determinate direction which this craving takes after *money*, is purely accidental; and arises from the general consent of society, that money shall be the representative of all property; and, as such, the key to all the avenues of worldly enjoyment. But as the existence of this conventional arrangement renders the possession of some amount of property indispensable, the application of



the term *covetousness* has come to be confined almost exclusively to an *inordinate and selfish regard for money*."—pp. 52, 53.

Take also the sketch of avarice.

"*Avarice*, is covetousness *hoarding*. It is the love of money in the abstract, or, for its own sake. Covetousness, in this monstrous form, indeed, is but of rare occurrence. For as money is a compendium of all kinds of worldly good, or so much condensed world, it is mostly desired for the sake of the gratifications which it can purchase; it is sought and valued as a kind of concentrated essence which can be diluted at pleasure, and adapted to the taste of every one who possesses it. But avarice is content with the bare possession of the essence; stopping short at the means, it is satisfied without the end. By a strange infatuation it looks upon gold as its own end; and, as the ornaments which the Israelites transferred into the hands of Aaron became a god, so gold, in the hand of avarice, becomes an ultimate good; to speak of its utility, or its application to practical purposes, would be almost felt as a profanation. Other vices have a particular view to enjoyment, (falsely so called,) but the very term *miser* is a confession of the misery which attends avarice; for in order to save his gold, the miser robs himself;

'Throws up his interest in both worlds,  
First starved in this, then damned in that to come.'

He cannot be said to possess wealth; wealth possesses him; or else he possesses it like a fever which burns and consumes him as if molten gold were circulating in his veins. Many vices wear out and are abandoned as age and experience increase, but avarice strikes deeper root as age advances; and, like the solitary tree of the desert, flourishes amidst sterility where nothing else could survive. Other passions are paroxysms, and intermit; but avarice is a distemper which knows no intervals. Other passions have their times of relaxation, but avarice is a tyrant which never suffers its slaves to rest. It is the fabled dragon with its golden fleece, and with lidless and unslumbering eyes it keeps watch and ward night and day."—pp. 58, 59.

One great excellence of our author, is his skill in detecting the seat of moral disease, and another, his nerve in laying it bare: he handles with enviable tact, both the probe and the knife; and he

never forgets that he is operating on the *living* frame. We give a specimen:

"In the eyes of the world, a man may acquire, and through a long life maintain, a character for liberality and spirit, while his heart all the time goeth after his covetousness. His hand, like a channel, may be ever open; and because his income is perpetually flowing through it, the unreflecting world, taken with appearances, hold him up as a pattern of generosity; but the entire current is absorbed by his own selfishness. That others are indirectly benefited by his profusion, does not enter into his calculations; he thinks only of his own gratification. It is true his mode of living may employ others; but he is the idol of the temple, they are only priests in his service; and the prodigality they are empowered to indulge in, is only intended to decorate and do honour to his altar. To maintain an expensive establishment, to carry it high before the world, to settle his children *respectably* in life, to maintain a system of costly self-indulgence,—these are the objects which swallow up all his gains, and keep him in a constant fever of ill-concealed anxiety; filling his heart with envy and covetousness at the sight of others' prosperity; rendering him loath to part with a fraction of his property to benevolent purposes; making him feel as if every farthing of his money so employed were a diversion of that farthing from the great ends of life; and causing him even to begrudge the hallowed hours of the Sabbath as so much time lost (if, indeed, he allows it to be lost) to the cause of gain. New channels of benevolence may open around him in all directions; but as far as he is concerned, those channels must remain dry, for, like the sands of the desert, he absorbs all the bounty which Heaven rains on him, and still craves for more. What but this is commonly meant by the expression concerning such a man, that 'he is living up to his income?' The undisguised interpretation is, that he is engrossing to himself all that benevolence which should be diffused throughout the world; that he is appropriating all that portion of the divine bounty with which he has been intrusted, and which he ought to share with the rest of mankind; and that he is thus disabling himself for all the calls and claims of Christian charity. Alas! that so large a proportion of professing Christians should be, at this moment, systematically incapacitating themselves for any thing more than scanty dribblets of charity, by their unnecessary expenditure, their

extravagant self-indulgence. Where avarice, or hoarding, has slain its thousands, a lavish profusion has slain its tens of thousands; and where the former robs the cause of God of a mite, the latter robs it of a million."—pp. 62–64.

Under the same head, (the prevalence of covetousness,) after showing the bearing of our Lord's ministry on this vice, the writer adds the subjoined powerful and beautiful passage:

"But the last triumph of covetousness remained yet to be achieved. To have sold the temple for money would have been an act of daring impiety; to make it the place of merchandise was, perhaps, still worse, it was adding sacrilege to impiety. Only one deed more remained to be perpetrated, and covetousness might then rest satisfied. There was one greater than the temple. God so loved the world that he had sent his only begotten Son to redeem it—might not *he* be sold? Covetousness, in the person of Judas, looked on him, eyed him askance, and went to the traffickers in blood, and, for the charm of thirty pieces of silver, betrayed him,—a type of the manner in which the cause of mercy would be betrayed in every succeeding age. Yes, in the conduct of Judas, the incarnation of cupidity, towards Jesus Christ, the incarnation of benevolence, we may behold an intimation of the quarter from which, in all succeeding times, the greatest danger would arise to the cause of Christ. The scene of the Saviour's betrayal for money was an affecting rehearsal, a prophetic warning, of the treatment which his gospel might expect to the end of the world.

"And have events falsified the prediction? Let the history of the corruptions of Christianity testify. The spirit of gain deserted the Jewish temple, only to take up its abode in the Christian church. Having sold the Saviour to the cross, it proceeded, in a sense, to sell the cross itself. We allude not to the venality of selling 'the wood of the true cross,'—that was only a diminutive of that accursed lust of gain which 'thought the gift of God might be purchased with money,' and which literally placed the great blessings of the cross at sale. Gradually, every thing became a source of gain. Not a single innovation, or rite, was introduced, which had not a relation to gain. Nations were laid under tribute. Every shrine had its gifts; every confession its cost; every prayer its

charge; every benediction its price. Dispensation from duty, and indulgence in sin, were both attainable at the sum set down. Liberation from hell, and admission into heaven, were both subject to money. And, not content with following its victims into the invisible state, Covetousness even there created a third world, for the purpose of assessing its tortured inhabitants. Thus the religion whose blessings were intended to be without money and without price, became the tax and burden of the world; a proverb for extortion and rapine; till the wealth which the church had drained from a thousand states, 'turned to poison in its bosom,' and mankind arose to cast it from them as a bloated corruption and a curse.

"The truth is, covetousness is native to our fallen nature; and, unless religion vanquish it, in its indiscriminate ravages, it will vanquish religion. Other forms of selfishness are partial in their operation, being either confined to a party, or, at most, to an order of character; but covetousness is the sin of humanity: it is the name of a disease which knows no distinction of class or party—the epidemic malady of our race.

"Gold, is the only power which receives universal homage. It is worshipped in all lands without a single temple, and by all classes without a single hypocrite; and often has it been able to boast of having armies for its priesthood, and hecatombs of human victims for its sacrifices. Where war has slain its thousands, gain has slaughtered its millions; for while the former operates only with the local and fitful terrors of an earthquake, the destructive influence of the latter is universal and unceasing. Indeed war itself—what has it often been but the art of gain practised on the largest scale? the covetousness of a nation resolved on gain, impatient of delay, and leading on its subjects to deeds of rapine and blood? Its history, is the history of slavery and oppression in all ages. For centuries, Africa—one quarter of the globe—has been set apart to supply the monster with victims—thousands at a meal. And, at this moment, what a populous and gigantic empire can it boast! the mine, with its unnatural drudgery; the manufactory, with its swarms of squalid misery; the plantation, with its imbruted gangs; and the market and the exchange, with their furrowed and care-worn countenances,—these are only specimens of its more menial offices and subjects. Titles and honours are among its rewards, and thrones at its disposal. Among its coun-

sellers are kings, and many of the great and mighty of the earth enrolled among its subjects. Where are the waters not ploughed by its navies? What imperial element is not yoked to its car? Philosophy itself has become a mercenary in its pay; and science, a votary at its shrine, brings all its noblest discoveries, as offerings, to its feet. What part of the globe's surface is not rapidly yielding up its last stores of hidden treasure to the spirit of gain? or retains more than a few miles of unexplored and unvanquished territory? Scorning the childish dream of the philosopher's stone, it aspires to turn the globe itself into gold."—pp. 75—79.

The present predominance of covetousness in Britain is portrayed with the fidelity of true patriotism. But we purposely omit this and other topics, to afford space for the following weighty and interesting paragraphs:

"Has the management of our benevolent societies escaped the prevailing evil? The guardians of the funds of benevolence, indeed, cannot too carefully protect them from exorbitant charges, and a wasteful expenditure; but, at the same time, they are not, under the plea of economy, to refuse to the tradesman a remunerating profit. Yet tradesmen are occasionally heard to complain that such is the fact; that the grinding system of some of our religious committees leaves them to do business for nothing. Besides which, is there not, in many instances, too much reliance placed on the efficacy of money for the accomplishment of religious objects? too much deference paid to wealth in the selection of chairmen, officers, and members? too evident a disposition to estimate the prosperity of an institution by the amount of its funds? too much of a pecuniary rivalry with kindred institutions? and too little delicacy about the means employed to swell the funds, provided only the increase take place? Is it not equally true of the institution that 'maketh haste to be rich,' as of the man, that it 'cannot be innocent'?"

"Are our public meetings of benevolence free from the taint? Is there nothing questionable in the way in which money is raised on those occasions? nothing of a worldly mechanism for raising benevolence to the giving point? nothing of the anxiety of a pecuniary adventure felt, by those most deeply interested, at the commencement of a meeting? and,

N. S. NO. 142.

as the pecuniary experiment proceeds, is not that anxiety increased as to how the speculation will succeed? Are there not occasions when our platforms exhibit a scene too much resembling a *bidding* for notice?—The writer feels that he is treading on delicate ground; nor has he advanced thus far on it without trembling. He is fully aware that many of those scenes to which he alludes have originated spontaneously, unexpectedly, and from pure Christian impulse:—would that the number of such were increased! He does not forget that some of the agents of benevolence who are most active in promoting a repetition of such scenes, are among the excellent of the earth. He bears in mind, too, that among those whose names are *proclaimed* as donors on such occasions, are some whom it is a privilege to know; men who give privately as well as publicly; whose ordinary charity is single-handed. And he feels convinced that the ruling motive of all, is, to enlarge the sphere of Christian beneficence to the glory of the grace of God. Nor can he be insensible to the unkind construction to which these remarks, however humbly submitted, are liable to expose him; or to the avidity with which the captious and the covetous will seize and turn them to their own unhallowed account; or to the force of the plea that the best things are open to abuse, and that it is easy to raise objections against the purest methods and means of benevolence. Still, however, he feels himself justified in respectfully submitting to the Christian consideration of those most deeply concerned in the subject, whether our anxiety for the attainment of the glorious *end*, has left us sufficiently jealous for the purity of the means; whether some of these means do not call for re-consideration; whether they do not too directly appeal to motives which the gospel discountenances and disowns; and whether they rely sufficiently on the power of Christian appeal to Christian principle;—whether, in fine, the mechanical spirit of the age is not beginning to influence the supply of our funds, to the injury of the spirit of genuine benevolence."—pp. 96—98.

The wisdom and piety of these sentiments, to say nothing of their prudence and modesty, are, in our opinion, unquestionable. The facts to which they refer have doubtless arisen, in great measure, from that very prevalence of covetousness in

4 N

our commercial country on which the author is commenting. This, while it imbues the mere professor, necessarily tinges the characters of the pious. For regeneration is but the commencement of a process that is retarded at every step by the evils which previously possessed the heart. Hence every Christian finds his easily besetting sins to be the same in nature, how much soever modified in degree, as they were before his conversion. The same principle operates in collective bodies. The sin of the nation gives a bias to the failings of the church. The Corinthians, once infamous for sensuality, were, after their reception of Christianity, again polluted by its fascinations. The Jewish converts carried a portion of their national exclusiveness into their new relationships. The cases of discipline that occur at our missionary stations are modified in the same way; in one country intemperance, in another impurity, is the prevalent transgression. And if we, as a people, are as guilty of covetousness as Mr. Harris has proved us to be, our religious societies must, without a miracle, be tainted by the contagion their members have imbibed. Neither the church, nor the committee-room, nor the platform, possesses any specific virtue immediately and inevitably to annihilate the virus; nor have they expelled it. Subscriptions to promote the cause of truth and charity are, in some instances, we know, obtained by the employment of stratagems which would be discreditable in trade, and of influence which would be branded in politics. We do, therefore, most cordially unite in the intreaty of our respected friend. Let the idea be admitted, that error in our own plans is at least possible. Let them be reviewed, scrutinized, submitted to

the light of Scripture, and the influence of the cross. Let the concluding recommendations of this Essay be enforced by ministers, and adopted by their flocks, and a purer day will dawn upon the church. The sinful will be rejected, the questionable abandoned, the legitimate invigorated and extended. We shall still employ, in the service of religion, the gifts of God, but not the weapons of the world. We shall still plan and calculate, but we shall cease to grind and to entrap. No more, as dwarfs, shall we disgrace the ranks of the army of light, the shame of our friends, the scoff of our foes; but having reached the standard height of celestial warriors, "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," we shall wear our armour with the grace, and wield our swords with the energy of heaven. Hell, awakened by our vigour, shall be constrained to exert all its skill, and to concentrate all its forces; and they shall "assemble" to be vanquished, and "gird themselves" to be crushed.

From the *excuses* of covetousness we should have liked to extract, at least, the passage which answers the plea founded on parental foresight: but we must hasten to the *tests*, by which the author attempts to discover the existence of undue attachment to wealth. Take the following paragraph: covetousness must be indeed uniquely compounded in that mind, which is not affected by the appliances of this moral chemistry.

"You may hear occasionally of a magnificent donation made unexpectedly by Christian gratitude to the cause of God;—what is your first emotion at the report?—admiration of the act? and gratitude to the grace which produced it?—or a feeling that the donor has unnecessarily exceeded the *rules* of ordinary benevolence? and a disposition to impute motives of vanity and ostentation? If a

benevolent mind had conceived some new project of mercy requiring pecuniary support, would your presence be a congenial atmosphere for the bud to unfold in? or, would the first emotion expressed in your countenance be a chilling doubt, or a blighting, withering frown? True benevolence, is not only voluntary as opposed to reluctant—it is often spontaneous as opposed to solicited;—but does yours always expect to be waited on? has it always to be reminded? does it need to be urged? does it never anticipate the appeal, and run to meet its object? And when you do give, is it your object to part with as little as you can without shame, as if you were driving a hard bargain with one who sought to overreach you? and is that little parted with reluctantly, with a half-closed hand, as if you were discharging a doubtful debt on compulsion? Is it given with the air of a capitulation, or bribe, to importunity, leaving the applicant who receives it ill at ease? Do you think highly of the trifle you give? not only calculating beforehand how much you can spare, but frequently remembering it afterwards? pluming yourself on the benevolent exploit? looking out for its emblazonment in the ensuing Report? and wondering how men can deny themselves the luxury of doing similar good?—then the mark of selfishness is upon you. For, only remember how cheerfully you are constantly parting with similar sums for purposes of self-indulgence, soon forgetting them, repeating and forgetting them again, ‘thinking nothing of them.’”—pp. 125, 126.

The light which the present writer pours on a text of Scripture, and the halo of beauty with which he encircles it, are frequently exemplified in the section on the guilt and evils of covetousness. One from many must suffice.

“But where covetousness does not lead the professed believer to open apostacy, it involves him in the guilt of idolatry; and this, in the eye of Scripture, is a step beyond. If the former be the rejection of the true God, the latter is the adoption of a false one. Endeavour to escape from the charge as he may, *his covetousness is idolatry*. The general impression on hearing this proposition is, that the term *idolatry* is only employed by the apostle in an accommodated sense—that covetousness is only *figurative* idolatry. But in the figure lies its force. There is not more *essential* idolatry, at

this moment, on the face of the earth, than that which the avaricious man pays to his gold. The ancient Persian who adored the sun *only as the visible image of God*, was guiltless of idolatry compared with him. And the only pretence he can have for saying he is not guilty, is, that he does not perform acts of bodily prostration before it. But acts of mere formal homage are no more necessary to constitute a man a worshipper of mammon, than they are to render him a real worshipper of God; in each instance, the homage of the heart is in the stead of all outward prostrations. And does not his gold receive that? Is not his heart a temple from which God has been excluded, in order to make room for mammon? While he worships God, formally, as if He were only an idol, does he not accord to his gold as much cordiality as if it were God? regarding it with all those deep feelings, and mental glances of confidence, which should be reserved for God alone? The idols of the heathen stood, so to speak, between heaven and earth, obscuring the vision of God, intercepting, and appropriating the incense which should have ascended to the eternal throne: and does not his gold, instead of leading his thoughts in gratitude to God, stand between him and the Divine Being, concealing God from his view, engrossing his thoughts to itself, and filling him with that satisfaction which the soul should find in God alone? If his gold could be endowed with the power of perception, would it not be tempted to think itself a god? If it possessed the power of reading his heart towards it, would it not find its image enshrined there? and a degree of affection lavished on it, and a closeness of communion maintained with it, such as a god might accept? *His covetousness is idolatry*.”—pp. 158—160.

The doom and excuses of covetousness are written with equal power. Let the observations commencing at p. 209, be long and deeply pondered by every individual, who, desiring tranquillity on a dying pillow, has made a will, or has yet a will to make.

The third part of the volume is rich in practical suggestions and in devout appeals. A sample of each must close our extracts.

“Nothing that is good or great, we repeat, can be effected without pain. Business, to be successful, must be con-

ducted on system; and why should not the book which records the occasional and the regular contributions of charity be kept and inspected as carefully as the ledger of trade? Covetousness plans for selfish purposes; and why should not benevolence counter-plan, and organize its resources for objects of divine philanthropy? Political economy plans for national purposes; and why should there not be an ecclesiastical economy to systematize the resources of that kingdom which is not of this world? We desire not a revival of sumptuary laws to restrain extravagance in diet and dress, but a tax self-levied on all the luxuries and indulgences of life. We ask not for an inquisitorial Roman *census*, but for a conscientious assessment of all the property of the Christian church, so scrupulously made and regularly repeated, that, like that ancient republic, we may have accurate returns from time to time of all the statistics of the Christian empire, and may know our resources for war with the kingdom of darkness.

"But what *proportion* of our income ought we to devote to charitable uses? If Christian love be permitted to answer this question, and assign the amount, there is no reason to fear a too scanty allowance. On the other hand, if selfishness be suffered to decide, there is ground to fear that even an inspired reply, could such be obtained, would be heard only to be overruled. Besides which, the gospel of Christ, in harmony with its great design of establishing a reign of love, leaves its followers to assess themselves. It puts into their hands, indeed, a claim upon their property, but leaves the question *how much?* to be determined by themselves. In assisting them to fill up the blank with the proper assessment, the only step which it takes is to point them to the cross of Christ; and, while their eye is fixed there in admiring love, to say, 'How much owest thou unto thy Lord?' 'Freely ye have received, freely give.'

"It must be quite unnecessary to remind the Christian that a principle of justice to man must be laid as the basis of all our calculations on this subject. 'For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt-offering.' To present him with that which his own laws of justice would assign to another, is to overlook the claims of even ordinary honesty, and to make him the Patron of unrighteousness. But while the worldling looks on justice as the only claimant on his property, and concludes that when *that* is satisfied, he may warrantably sacrifice the whole remainder to himself, the

Christian views it only as a preparation for sacrificing to God.

"It is observable that Abraham and Jacob, on particular occasions, voluntarily devoted to God—what afterwards became a divine law for the Jewish nation—a *tenth* of their property. Without implying that their example has any obligation on us, we may venture to say that *one tenth* of our whole income is an approved proportion for charity, for those who, with *so* doing, are able to support themselves and families. For the more opulent, and especially for those who have no families, a larger proportion would be equally easy. For some, one half would be too little; while, for others, a twentieth, or even a fiftieth, would require the nicest frugality and care. Indeed, of many among the poor it may be said, that if they give *any thing* they give their *share*, they *cast in more* than all their brethren."—pp. 244–247.

Experience has taught many a Christian the value of these sentiments. The tranquillity of mind produced by such a deliberate appropriation of property, is unspeakable. The question, *how much?* is not by him to be discussed as occasions arise, amidst hurry and excitement, attended, on the one hand, by fears that he is chargeable with injustice, or on the other, with avarice. His estimate of income has been calmly and devoutly made; reason and feeling have occupied their respective provinces; and the surrender has been prompted, regulated, and as he trusts, approved, by a present God. And such a man is prepared for greater sacrifices. Not only is the power of habit acquiring new force with every act set in operation, but the tendency of good, like evil, to multiply itself is fairly tried; for benevolence as well as selfishness, possesses vitality. The mother who first sacrifices her slumbers to her babe will, by and by, if required, for its sake risk her life. Abraham, who gave tithes to Melchizedek, afterwards offered Isaac to God. And the Christian who punctually and cheerfully



tenders his annual quit rent to the great Proprietor, gradually acquires a steady conviction that, not his money alone, but his ease, reputation, life, are the property of another. Dedication of gold ripens into self-dedication. Is personal effort required? Is the sacrifice of self-gratification, or self-improvement, demanded? Do the groans of despairing heathen, or their mad laugh of indifference, reach our shores? Does persecution threaten the loss of property or of life—its British or its French Bartholomews? Then, set the facts which these questions imply, not before the man of impulse but of principle. The first has never calculated on their possible claims. The other knew that they were "in the bond," and is prepared to pay. And thus the folio of the ledger that contains the charity account, is the germ of the missionary's pledge, or the martyr's confession. Such was the estimate of the infallible Teacher. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." On this principle is based his cutting enquiry—"If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" And yet we wonder, that a missionary spirit has not pervaded the churches, and impelled the ministers of our country. Still we marvel, that modern enterprise has discovered no royal road to spiritual eminence; that the eager inquiry for foreign agents that is scrutinizing our land, remains comparatively unanswered? that the cry has been heard in the camp, "Who is on the Lord's side?" and the tribe of Levi slumbers!—forgetting that Elisha sacrificed his oxen, before he followed Elijah; and that John abandoned

his nets, before he faced the Sanhedrim.

The hearts that are unmoved by our author's appeals are no objects for a Christian's envy. The following paragraphs are not specially culled for insertion; but are equalled in beauty and pathos by many kindred passages.

"Think of the great goodness you enjoy at his hands. His tender mercies are over all his works; but how many of those mercies has he caused to meet upon your head! 'He daily loadeth you with his benefits;' and will you bear them all away from his presence to consume them upon yourself? will you distribute none of the precious load among the numerous applicants he has placed around you? 'He crowneth thee with his loving-kindness and tender mercies;' and wearing the crown of his royal favour, his sovereign love, will you confine its light to yourself? will you not proclaim and honour the royalty of your descent by humbly imitating his regal munificence and grace? He has placed you in a world of which his own description is, that it is full of his goodness—the treasury of the material universe. Men have filled it with sin; but he notwithstanding keeps it filled with his goodness. The overflowing fulness of the ocean—the amplitude of the all-encompassing air—the unconfined plenitude of the light—all conspire to attest the infinite exuberance of his bounty, and to surcharge your heart with corresponding sentiments of goodness. To be selfish in such a world is one of the greatest triumphs of sin. Covetousness cannot move in it without being rebuked at every step. Had your life been spent till to-day in the solitude and darkness of a dungeon, and had you now just come forth into the open theatre of the vast creation, and awoke for the first time to the full consciousness of all this infinite goodness, would not your heart enlarge and expand with all warm and generous emotions? Could you speedily indulge in selfishness in a world which you found supported by charity? and by charity so abundant that the divine Donor seems to have aimed to make the sin impossible? His rain would surely baptize you with the spirit of love: his sun would melt you into kindness. This is why he sheds them both upon the just and the unjust. And will you not aspire to be like him? Will you not become the servant of his love to his creatures? Can you live day after day in this region of his goodness—

can you have the ennobling conception of his goodness occupying your mind year after year—can you actually call yourself a son of this good and gracious God, an heir of his infinite goodness, and yet retain a narrow, selfish, and contracted mind? The Lord Jesus himself calls on you to be merciful even as your Father in heaven is merciful.

"But hitherto we have been standing only on the threshold of the temple of his goodness." The great display, the 'unspeakable gift' remains within. Your misery as a sinner had excited his compassion; your guilt demanded a sacrifice; your spiritual destitution had nothing to offer. Approach the altar of sacrifice; and behold the substitute which his grace provides. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.' 'Herein is love!' The universe is crowded with proofs of his beneficence; but here is a proof which outweighs them all. How much he loved us we can never compute; we have no line with which to fathom, no standard with which to compare it, but he *so* loved us that he sent his only begotten Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 'Herein is love!' 'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.'

"And while you are standing in the presence of this matchless display of love, what doth the Lord require of thee? For yourself, he invites you to accept that love and be happy. And in relation to your fellow-men, he only requires that the stream of gratitude which his great love has drawn from your heart should be poured into that channel in which a tide of mercy is rolling through the world, and bearing blessings to the nations. He who for your sake gave his Son, asks you for his sake to give of your worldly substance to the cause of human happiness. He asks you, Christian, to cast in your mite into that treasury into which he hath given his Son, and poured all the blessings of his grace."—pp. 268—271.

But our space is exhausted long before our quotations are disposed of. We take leave of our author with the feelings of friendship. We thank him not only for an intellectual banquet, but for moral guidance and spiritual instruction. We acknowledge our obligations to God for new light, and a fresh impulse. We have been compelled, critics as we are, to review our *balance-sheet*, and to amend our

*will*. And the church shares our responsibility: the book is a boon to Christianity, and ought to form an epoch in its history.

*Christian Union: showing the importance of Unity among real Christians of all Denominations, and the means by which it may be effected.* By John Bowes, Pastor of a Christian Church, Dundee. pp. xii. 311. London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1835.

THIS work is on a subject of vital interest to the whole Church of Christ. No devout and reflecting mind can be satisfied with its present divided state. The aspect and movements of the times imperatively call on all Christians to consider how their unity may be strengthened in its internal principles, and exhibited to the world more openly and efficiently by increasing intercourse and co-operation.

The proceedings of the Missionary Societies, and still more, perhaps, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, have brought the distinct Christian communities into a new relative position. Before these institutions began their beneficent career, there was scarcely any public acknowledgment by any of the sections of the church, that the others possessed the essentials of Christianity. But now every member of these societies is forward to publish that the true faith and spirit of the gospel exist and flourish in sects considerably different from his own. The distinction between *essentials* and *non-essentials* has been far better understood: and Christians of different and apparently rival sects, have freely recognized each other as fellow-members of the one spiritual church of the Redeemer.

But these societies have not restored the *primitive* unity: whatever of this kind may have been boasted in oratorical flourishes at

public meetings. They do not, in fact, profess to restore it, or to aim at it, or even to acknowledge that it is necessary. Persons are admitted into them *not* as genuine believers in the Lord, but as persons willing to pay money for a specific object: that object being only *a part* of the duty which Christians owe to their Redeemer; whereas the first churches were organized to promote the performance of *the whole*. These societies, and kindred movements, may show in some respects a valuable *approach* to the restoration of primitive unity; but an approach less considerable than has often been supposed.

They have, however, given a wide currency to the *idea* of its restoration, and have cherished a spirit favourable to so great a change, and those who expect and long for it will see the importance of calling attention to the means by which it may be promoted, before the kindly feelings which attended the growth of these societies shall have been materially diminished by the ecclesiastical struggles of the present generation. These may possibly have a worse effect on the youth now receiving permanent impressions, than their predecessors received from the uniting process in the formation of Bible and Missionary Societies. We are glad, therefore, to be summoned to attend in a practical way to the important subject of "*Christian Union*," by Mr. Bowes, who is an active and useful minister, formerly connected with one of the more recent Methodist communities, but now pastor of a congregation in Dundee, formed some years ago, in connexion with a few others in Scotland, on somewhat of a methodist model, but now along with them virtually *independent*; though they decline the use of that, and of any other distinct name, ex-

cept *Christian*, and are parts of an association calling themselves "*The United Christian Churches*."—pp. 237, 307—310.

The volume we find marked throughout by good sense and Christian feeling, expressed in a style that is plain, concise, unambitious, and occasionally forcible; and abounding with quotations from Howe, Baxter, Whitfield, Wesley, Robert Hall, Mason (of New York), Douglas, Dick, and other able writers, which, though well selected, are too numerous to please every reader, however they may promote the conviction of some. We must, however, confess that Mr. B. is more successful in exposing the sinful causes and injurious consequences of sectarian divisions, than in pointing out the method by which they may be removed, or in animating others to make the attempt.

The work is divided into eight chapters. In the first, where he makes free use of Milner, on the "*Rise of the first Sects*," regarding the Gnostics and others, who erred fundamentally as not belonging to the church, he exhibits its *unity* for more than two centuries; then its division by the Novatians, and afterwards by the Donatists. His statement concerning the former, which perhaps throws the blame too exclusively on the separatists, closes thus:—

"One can scarcely read this account without deep emotion. What a wide-spreading injury have distinct sects inflicted upon the church of the living God! We have seen that the first sect originated in corruption, bigotry, and pride, and we shall have occasion to remark in another place, that many of our modern sects may be traced to the same sources. Divisions flow from a bad fountain, and as is the cause, so are the effects. A corrupt fountain sends forth corrupt streams. Divisions, animosities, and schisms arise from the corruptions and bad dispositions of professors of religion, and a consideration of their *mean* origin

should abate our attachment to them, and prepare the way for their entire abolition. We have given them as much reverence and regard as though they had descended from heaven to purify and bless the church on earth. But a little attention to their infancy, growth, and effects, will teach us that heaven disowns them, and that the church *should* excrete them."—pp. 9, 10.

All this is very just, if the corruption of the general church, of which Mr. B. quotes proofs in p. 7, be accounted *one* leading cause of the rupture. It had evidently disgusted the vigorous and stoical, but conscientious and devout spirit of Novatian, whose writings deserve, for strength of thought, occasional sublimity of style, and decisive orthodoxy, tinctured however with the opinions of the age, more attention than most of the other Christian fathers. Milner's acknowledgment should be remembered: "no vice seems affixed to his character; nor does any just suspicion lie against the purity of his intentions." But we doubt whether this division should be accounted the *first*. The case of Tertullian and his writings, viewed along with the candid and valuable illustrations of Bishop Kaye, and the early history of the Quakers, render it not improbable that a number of the *Montanists*, however misguided, were genuine Christians, and their avowed principles understood by others in a darker sense than they intended.

The second chapter, on the "*Origin of [present] Divisions*," begins with the 16th century, showing how the intolerant and persecuting maxims of the papacy warped the minds of the Reformers through educational prepossession; and traces the divisions of Protestants concerning the Lord's Supper, the rise of the Puritans in England, the ejection of the Nonconformists, and the intolerant maxims prevalent in almost

all parties. Mr. B. then relates the secession from the Scottish Church, Mr. Whitfield's interviews with the seceders, Mr. Wesley's virtual exclusion from the English Establishment, his rupture with Whitfield, the separation from the Wesleyans, headed by Mr. Kilham, and the formation of the Relief Synod in Scotland, introducing these pages as follows:—

"It will be necessary, in order further to illustrate what has already been asserted, viz. that divisions among Protestants have originated in *corruption* and *bigotry* or *intolerance*, that we should advert to the rise of a few more of the principal sects at present refusing to hold communion with other."

This sentence we have copied for the purpose of remarking that *ignorance* ought to have been included among the causes of Protestant divisions, and that the refusal to hold communion is not by any means so general as the words imply.—The case, too, of Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, in this chapter, might with advantage have been made more prominent; as it began the controversy concerning the imposition of ceremonies and circumstantialia, from which such important consequences have flowed.

The third chapter answers exactly to its title, (p. 48,) *SOME of the causes which tend to perpetuate divisions*; for the only two mentioned are, 1. "*Making those doctrines and practices tests of membership*, which are not essential to salvation;" and, 2. "*A bigoted attachment to a party*." In treating of the first, the views of Hall and Mason in their justly admired works on Terms of Communion, are advocated, with some interesting illustrations, and applied to particular cases. The second is traced to three causes, "*unwillingness to deviate from the principles of our ancestors*," "*illiberal prejudices*," chiefly educational, and

"selfishness," These causes doubtless operate, as well as others which are not named.

The fourth chapter, on "*The evil Consequences of Divisions*," extending through 68 pages, we consider far the most valuable part of the work. It includes twenty-two particulars, most of them distinct evils of no small magnitude, well deserving the serious attention of all prayerful spirits, especially of such as have influence, however small, in the movements of the religious world. In the hope that our readers will peruse them in the volume itself, we shall not copy these particulars, but only make an extract or two. Under the *eighth*, which alleges that restrictive zeal tends to expel from the churches a *sense of their common interests*, the author remarks,

"Should the time ever arrive, when all discordant sects have ceased to exist—and may the Lord hasten it,—Christians would never think of sending two or three rival ministers to form as many rival churches in a small village; they would send one minister, around whom all the followers of Christ in the neighbourhood might assemble, and be formed into a powerful church,—a mode of procedure which could not fail to produce a very different impression upon the surrounding population, to that which is produced by the present carnal and irrational system."—p. 92.

Again, under the fifteenth remark, "*That the divisions which exist among Protestants tend to prejudice the members of the Church of Rome against the Reformation, and to keep them fastened in the chains of superstition.*" After showing the entire hollowness of the ostensible unity of the Papal Church, he quotes a Roman Catholic publication to prove the injurious effect of Protestant divisions on their minds, adding,

"It is not for want of powerful arguments that we cannot convince Romanists of the errors of their system, but because their minds are fortified against our arguments."—N. S. NO. 142.

ments by our lamentable divisions. They say, 'We do not know what church to join if we were to leave the Church of Rome.' And Protestants hardly dare name any church in preference to another, lest their artful opponents should take the liberty of asking, 'But if that church is the true one, are all the rest of the Protestant churches wrong?' To which interrogatory few among us would venture to give an affirmative reply. We feel the disadvantages of our divided situation, and perhaps never more sensibly than in our attempts to disabuse the minds of the deluded votaries of Rome."—p. 117.

Soon after he extracts these striking sentences from Baxter:

"Thousands have been drawn to popery by this argument already, or confirmed in it. And I am persuaded, that all the arguments in Bellarmine, and all their other treatises, have not been so effectual to make Papists here, as the multitude of sects among ourselves."

Mr. B. closes this part of his work as follows:

"It is impossible fully to depict the evils which flow, and the great injury which results from the present state of the Protestant interest. Enough has been said to prove the proposition already adduced. But who can say enough to awaken Protestants to a proper sense of the evil of those vile separations with which they seem delighted and happy? Who can employ language or arguments sufficiently forcible to arouse them from their guilty slumbers, to make them hate sectarianism as they ought, to hate that which has contributed, in a principal measure, to caricature and mask the excellent of the earth.

"The Church of Rome beholds our divisions as we ought to behold them; she regards them as sinful and unscriptural. In vain do we hope to counsel her erring members, while they see such practical absurdities in our churches. In vain do we set their abominations before them, since we cannot conceal our own."—p. 119.

We are deeply convinced, that it is the duty of Protestants, especially of Protestant Dissenters, (who are not encumbered in argument by the inconvenient and absurd concessions of Conformists,) to labour and pray for the eradication of popery from Europe

and the world; as much as to labour for the eradication of paganism in India, China, or elsewhere. Political considerations ought not to delay or relax our opposition to this great enemy of the truth, strongly marked as it is in *Scripture* with the Divine abhorrence, and doomed at no distant period to entire subversion. But who shall awake us to the perception and the discharge of our arduous and honourable duty? We have scarcely a hope, except in some effusion of the Divine Spirit, like that which, in the close of the last century, originated missions to the heathen, at a time when political convulsions appeared to have given popery a death-blow, from which it has strangely revived—to be, however, the more illustriously destroyed. This is doubtless to be accomplished in a great measure by the word of God, propagated by his servants, and made powerful by his Spirit. And the voice of the Saviour calls on Protestant sects to abate the eagerness of their unholy struggles, and attempt, in the spirit of prayer and faith, the subversion of the great Antichrist.

But we return to Mr. Bowes; from whom the length at which we have already quoted, deters us from copying some very important remarks, under the twentieth particular, that divisions “oppose a counteracting influence to the efforts which we make for the *conversion of the world*,” and the twenty-first, that their “influence upon the *infant* or *Missionary Churches* abroad, may be more extensive and disastrous than we anticipate.”—pp. 131–138. This part of the subject we cannot but regard of great importance, and earnestly recommend our readers to consider it in the light in which it has been placed by Mr. Bowes, here and in his sixth chapter, pp. 177–189,—

by Mr. Isaac Taylor, in his “*New Model of Christian Missions*,” and by the authoress of the “*Spirit of Sectarianism*,” an anonymous pamphlet of considerable merit, published by Holdsworth and Ball, 1833.

The subject of Mr. B.'s *fifth* chapter is “*the nature of Christian union*,” in the commencement of which he remarks,

“In considering what kind of union is desirable in the present state of the churches, perhaps a distinction should be made between what is *scriptural*, and what is *immediately practicable*. Were our churches *nearly scriptural* in their constitution, we should only have to evince the divinely revealed plan of union, and it would be immediately adopted; but many of them are far from being scriptural. Hence, we are told, that our system is very good, but that it cannot be adopted in the present disorganized state of the different denominations. Our present duty seems therefore to be twofold; *first*, to erect the high standard disclosed in the Scriptures, and *then* to point out the steps by which all Christian denominations may advance upwards till they reach it. The former may be entered on at present. The latter must stand over until we arrive nearer the conclusion of the work.”

The method here proposed for treating the subject is excellent, no doubt, but very imperfectly executed by the present worthy author. All that he has advanced, indeed, deserves attention, and in most points our judgment coincides with his: but his expectations appear to us too low, and his plans defective. Instead, therefore, of going over the remainder of the work in order, we shall give only the titles of the chapters, and subjoin a few remarks.

The series of chapters is as follows:—6. *Arguments for the Unity of the Church*. 7. *Objections answered*. 8. *Directions for immediately restoring the Church to its primitive Unity*. Appendix.—Hoping our readers will be induced to examine these for them-



selves, we offer the following remarks to aid their review of the subject.

1. There is a want of clearness on the point whether Christians are to aim at an *entire removal* of sectarian distinctions from the church, and whether its future unity is to be full as great and as evident as it was in the first age. Mr. B. frequently refers to the primitive state as the standard; but in p. 243, he says,

"We urge none to give up any opinions or practice consistent with the spirit of the gospel. We do indeed say that all churches should receive into their communion those Christians whom Christ has accepted, and that they should abandon all party appellations, and recognize each other by the family name given to the disciples at Antioch. But we do not propose that the Calvinists, Methodists, Pædo-baptists, and Presbyterians should relinquish their peculiar sentiments and practices."

This view is neither so definite nor so animating as some that have been entertained by persons worthy of regard, as may be seen by referring to the *fourth* of Dr. Bogue's "Discourses on the Doctrine of the Millennium."

2. We do not understand how the names that denote the varieties of sentiment and practice among Christians can be *wholly* discarded, as Mr. B. strongly urges, while the *vanities themselves* continue. These must, of necessity, be often mentioned; and the convenience of a single word to denote each will keep the names current. Mr. Bowes' book is full of them. To a certain extent, indeed, his plan can be, and by some is already adopted. For instance, there are ministers who never mention their names in public worship, but distinguish both their own and neighbouring congregations, by the places in which they meet, not by any sectarian appellations.

3. Our author scarcely notices *ignorance* as a cause of disunion, nor *increase of knowledge* as a means of promoting union, on which topics both Dr. Bogue, Discourse II. and IV., and President Edwards, History of Redemption, Period 3, Part II. Sec. 1. have made some observations.

4. He takes no notice of the obstacles to union of a legal character, as certain clauses of the Act of Uniformity, and the trust deeds of chapels, colleges, and endowments, devoting them for ever to the use of some one or other of the existing sects. Yet he proposes to unite *all* evangelical Christians. Without some mode of dealing with these formidable obstacles, every plan of union must be very defective.

5. We know not how Mr. B. would advise in the following case. Suppose half a dozen independent congregations now in connexion with the Independent Association in their county, should adopt the views of Mr. B., exclude the name "Independent," and every other distinctive name, from all their documents and proceedings, admit all Christians who apply for the privilege to the Lord's table, on the simple ground of their Christianity, (as is done already in hundreds of our congregations,) and publish to all the necessity of Christian Union, are they to break their connexion with the County Association, and form a new association on the model of the United Christian Churches, of whom our author gives, at p. 237, so gratifying an account? If they do this, they become a part of a *new sect*; if not, they remain part of an *old one*. Though they may wear their name loose about them, they cannot throw it entirely away. Mr. B.'s answer, at p. 254, to the objection

that the tendency of his advice is to form a new sect, is far from satisfactory.

6. Though the author inculcates with suitable earnestness, that all who give evidence of conversion should be received to communion in every congregation where they may request it, we do not find in his work any proposal for bringing together *all* the genuine Christians in one town or neighbourhood once a-year, or oftener, to celebrate the Lord's Supper together.

If this could be accomplished, it would be an important step towards that outward unity which was desired by the framers of the *Savoy Confession*, as appears from the 24th article, of *order*. And we are glad to see it has been warmly and eloquently advocated by the Rev. R. W. Hamilton, in his discourse at the ordination of the Rev. Jos. Glendenning, of Knaresborough, in a passage of which we can insert only a small part.

"Oh! might I live to see these two events:—The frequent interchange of pulpits between the devoted ministers of Christ, and the frequent act of communion in the Lord's Supper between all their churches! I can perceive no reason why the episcopalian and the dissenting pastor might not

reciprocate their services; and willingly would I read his liturgy, and comply with his form, and perhaps not *exact quite* so much of him in return. How beautiful would it be to witness all the communicants of a town or neighbourhood repairing to a common scene of fellowship, 'one banqueting home,' without a party badge, one formed by the banner which is love."

To conclude; Mr. Bowes' book is the production of a man of plain good sense and solid piety; a successful labourer too in the ministry. It is a subject of immense importance to the Christian world, on which comparatively little has been written: and though many parts of it remain untouched by Mr. B., his work is worthy of general attention.

We understand that the author has travelled in England as well as Scotland, for the purpose of preaching or lecturing on Christian Union; but we have not heard much of the results.—Yet we can assure him, that so far as his labours tend to propagate the principles of union, without forming a new religious community, we cordially wish him success.

#### THE EDITOR'S TABLE.

Mr. Carpenter has published, in imperial 8vo. *The Biblical Companion, or an Introduction to the Reading and Study of the Holy Scriptures*. We shall take an early opportunity of noticing at length this important volume.

*Essays, Letters, and interesting Papers of the Rev. Thomas Charles, A.B. of Bala.* Edited by the Rev. G. Morgan, M.A.

The Rev. Charles Williams has published *The Seven Ages of England; or, its Advancement in Arts, Literature, and*

*Science, from the earliest periods to the present time.* A volume replete with amusing and instructive facts.

Messrs. Tegg have issued the third and fourth volumes of their beautiful and uniform edition of *The Miscellaneous Works of Adam Clarke, LL.D.* They contain C. Sturms' Reflections on the Being and Attributes of God, as corrected, translated, and greatly enlarged by their Editor; with sixteen entire new pieces.

The Rev. Wm. Thorn, of Winchester,

has published a work entitled *The Union of the Church and State unscriptural and undefensible; including a particular Review of Chancellor Dealtry's "Sermons," and of Archdeacon Horne's "Charge" in Defence of the Church of England; and exhibiting every material Argument hitherto advanced for and against political establishments of Christianity, which exhibits abundant evidence of the untiring industry and great acuteness of its author.*

The Rev. Professor Dale, of King's College, has performed a useful service in republishing, from the American edition, *The Student's Guide; designed, by specific directions, to aid in forming and strengthening the intellectual and moral Character and Habits of Students in every Profession; by the Rev. John Todd, Author of "Lectures to Children."* We regret it is left for us to add, "and Pastor of the second Congregational Church, Northampton, N.A."

*The Pope confounded, and his Kingdom exposed, in a divine opening of Daniel viii. 23. 25. by Martin Luther.* Now first translated into English by the Rev. Henry Cole, &c.

The Rev. C. Bradley has published another volume of his useful Discourses, entitled, *A Series of Practical Sermons.*

We are happy to announce a second and much improved edition of *The Great Teacher; Characteristics of our Lord's Ministry.* By the Rev. John Harris, Author of *Mammon*, &c.

*Christian Theology; by John Goodwin, A.M. selected and systematically arranged; with a Life of the Author.* By Samuel Dunn.

*The Angler's Rambles; by Edward Jesse, Esq. F.L.S.* an entertaining and instructive volume, especially to the disciples of Walton and Cotton.

*The Love of Money. A Tract for the Rich.* 18mo. pp. 60. Price 6d.

*An Essay on Covetousness, and the Claims of the Redeemer upon the Property of his People.* By Wm. Jones, Bolton. 18mo. pp. 162.

Messrs. Tegg have published another volume of *The Tales of Peter Parley*, of nursery celebrity. The present volume is "about Great Britain and Ireland, with a map, and numerous embellishments," that must be very attractive to juvenile readers.

*Theology for Youth; a Catechism on the Doctrines, Experience, Morals, and*

*Dispensations of Christianity.* By John Campbell. Third Edition.

*Pastoral Appeals; on Personal, Domestic, and Social Devotion.* By the Rev. R. W. Hamilton, Leeds. Second Edition. 18mo.

*Selections from a Correspondence on Subjects connected with Faith and Practice; with an Introductory Preface.* By Mrs. Stevens. 12mo.

*Jirah: A Scene in the Pastoral Life of the Author.*

*The Christian Legacy, Peace in Life, Death, and Eternity. Fifteen Discourses.* By the Rev. James Hough, A. M. 12mo.

*The Danger of Apostacy from Christ; exhibited in an Essay.* By G. B. Kidd, Macclesfield. 18mo.

*Hours of Thought.* 18mo.

*Christian Responsibility; or the duty of individual effort for the Conversion of Sinners.* By John Thornton, Durlington. 18mo.

*Sacred Pneumatology; or the Scripture Doctrine of the Holy Spirit; in Three Books.* By the Rev. Joseph Wilson, A. M. 12mo.

*The Family Liturgy.* By the Rev. R. W. Sibthorp, B. D. 12mo.

*The Christian Gift: containing a harmony of the Sacred Writers concerning the Deity and History of Jesus.* By Christopher Bell, Esq. of the Inner Temple. 12mo.

*A popular view of Atheism.* By James Davies. 12mo.

*The Protestant Catechism, &c.* By Rev. D. Bagot, A. M. 18mo.

*Walks and Scenes in Galilee, Judea, &c.* 12mo.

*The Young Divine: or a Plain and Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.* By the Rev. W. Fletcher. 18mo.

*Memoirs and Select Remains of the Rev. Thomas Rawson Taylor, late Classical Tutor at Airedale College, Yorkshire.* By W. S. Matthews. 12mo.

*The Interpretation: a summary view of the Revelation of St. John, founded chiefly on the Rev. H. Gamble's exposition of that book.* By the Rev. Thomas Jones, of Creaton.

*Going to Service: a sequel to "My Station and its Duties."* By the author of "The last Day of the Week."

*Daily Communings, by Bishop Horne.*

## SHORT CRITICAL NOTICES.

*Scripture Lessons, or the History of our Lord, in Question and Answer, designed for the Use of Bible Classes.* By Mrs. Henderson. Part I. and II. Westley and Davis. 18mo.

THE gifted authoress of these valuable little manuals has devoted herself for the past eight years to the tuition of young persons in scriptural knowledge, and as the benevolent superintendent of two important Sunday-schools, and the disinterested instructress of several private classes, she has possessed peculiar opportunities of adapting her extensive knowledge of the sacred writings to the mental capacities and habits of the young. The objects she contemplated, and the method she has pursued, are explained in the following paragraphs of her sensible preface:

"Simplicity and adaptation to general usefulness have been chiefly aimed at in the present compilation. The questions are framed to draw out the fulness of the text, so far as may be done in a brief compass; and the answers are studiously condensed, to render them easy of retention to the most unpractised memory. Many able works have been consulted, as those of Bloomfield, Horne, Henry, Scott, Doddridge, Campbell, Macknight, Whitby, Michaelis, &c., and in many instances the very words of one or other of the most approved authorities have been adopted as peculiarly appropriate for conveying the sense of the text. This has been done without reference: indeed plagiarism of the kind will be found too frequent for specific acknowledgment; and it is here avowed with no other feeling than that of obligation for the aid thus afforded.

"The gospel of Matthew has been chosen as the basis of these Lessons, partly because it furnishes so complete an account of our Lord's life, from the manger to his ascension from Mount Olivet, and partly because it is accounted to be more systematic, in a chronological point of view, than the Gospels of the other Evangelists. Occasion has been taken, however, to fill in the narrative of this apostolic writer, by references to parallel passages of Mark, Luke, and John, whenever such references appeared essential to a harmonious view of the historic details of inspiration, or to the removal of those apparent discrepancies which are found to exist between the distinct and independent testimonies of the four Evan-

gelists. Whether it be judicious to present difficulties of this kind to the consideration of youthful minds, though for the express purpose of removing them, as so many stumbling-blocks, out of their way for ever after, is a question that cannot here be discussed: but with deference to those who deem it inexpedient to do so, the author cannot but think, that, as no individual, in the present day of free inquiry, can pass through the world without hearing Christianity impugned, on some ground or other, by captious criticism or infidel insinuation, it must be advisable to fortify the intellect, by teaching it to grapple with a few of the commonest weapons by which the present confidence and immortal hopes of the believer are too frequently assailed. At the same time, the author is fully persuaded that Bible-classes ought not to be converted into polemical arenas; and that the great benefit to be proposed to ourselves, or others, from the study of holy writ, is rather the improvement of the heart than of the intellectual powers. Hence there has been a constant endeavour to apply every principle taught in these lessons to the highest spiritual ends."—pp. v. vi.

We think Mrs. Henderson has happily succeeded in explaining with great simplicity and point the evangelical narratives, and has strictly adhered to sound principles of interpretation, while she has "aimed at the highest spiritual" good of her pupils. We cordially wish her "*Lessons*" an extensive circulation.

*Is all Well? Or, a Pastoral Inquiry concerning Spiritual Health.* By Joseph Fletcher, D.D. London: Westley and Davis. pp. 59. 1836.

THESE "pages form the substance of three Discourses, lately delivered by the Author, to the Church and Congregation under his pastoral care." To those who are acquainted with the former productions of Dr. Fletcher, it is quite unnecessary to say, that every page of this little work displays correct taste, devout feeling, sound and cultivated mind. On the principle of accommodation, the preacher employs the well-known question of the grateful Syrian for the purpose of pastoral inquiry respecting the spiritual state of his flock. There are

four applications of this question to which he invites their thoughts. I. Is all well with respect to the great concerns of personal religion? II. Is all well with respect to the important duties of family religion? III. Is all well with respect to your individual connexion with the Church of Christ? IV. Is all well, as it respects your visible and practical consecration to the cause of God in the world?

Under the first head of inquiry, Dr. Fletcher observes:

"We live at a time when we are in danger of forgetting the substantial truths of God's word, and of allowing poor and unsatisfying substitutes in the various forms of mental gratification and amusement to usurp the time and place, which that word demands. Thus there is a narrow and stunted growth—a low and contracted stature in the Christian Church! How seldom we find that love of reading and that habit of contemplation, that fits the mind to grapple with difficult inquiries, and to grow in sanctified attainments;—that gives to the convictions of the judgment a firm and stable character, and prepares for a noble maturity and decision in the knowledge and application of Christian principles. Our venerable forefathers in the Church of God spared no toil or diligence, by which they might be 'furnished' to every good word and work. They were not deterred by the massy volume: the quarto and the folio were more rapidly studied by them than even the light and portable publications, which so readily succeed each other, that there is no time for either mental digestion or spiritual profit." pp. 8, 9.

Under the same head of inquiry we read,

"It is possible for a man to make his feelings a flattering unction to his spirit, and to rely upon them as a substitute for practical mortification. He may imagine, because he feels and mourns, and is at times conscious of sorrowful emotions, that these sensibilities of mind are alone sufficient indications of spirituality, while there is no vigorous, active mortification of sin."—pp. 12, 13.

Under the second head we had marked several passages for quotation, from which we select the following.

"The Sabbath, especially, should be appropriated to this department of duty, (domestic instruction.) 'The intervals of public worship ought to be improved for this purpose; and if only two public ser-

vices be attended to, either the afternoon or the evening should be devoted to domestic instruction. *How much of public instruction is rendered comparatively ineffectual for want of private explanation.*" p. 22.

Domestic instruction on the Lord's day, an instruction founded on the preaching of the gospel, was, once, a characteristic of protestant dissenting families, in distinction from the surrounding families of Episcopalians or of partial conformists. This characteristic has ceased to exist within the memory of some, who have not grown old. Happy will be Dr. Fletcher, or any other minister of Jesus Christ, who shall aid its restoration.

It would be pleasant to ourselves and gratifying to our readers to multiply quotations; but the work is so excellent throughout,—so adapted to the times in which we live, and, moreover, so easy of purchase, that we forbear—trusting all our readers will allow this little treatise to address them personally, and alone, in the much-needed question—"Is all well?"

*Expository Lectures on the Ten Commandments. By John Jefferson. 18mo. pp. 200. London: Ward and Co.*

THE moral law being the counterpart of the moral character of God, the perfection of his character renders absolute the perfection of his law. And if the perfection of the law that rests on the absolute perfection of the great Sovereign of the Universe, then the immutability of its principles, and the perpetuity of its obligations are for ever established. It is the exclusive prerogative of the Deity, in the sublimity of his independence and authority to reveal, what he requires of his dependant and intelligent, and because intelligent, responsible creatures. And the standard of moral rectitude being once fixed, it can never be lowered, nor modified; for a change in the provision of the law would imply imperfection in the Lawgiver, and then would necessarily follow the subversion of all government. This position Mr. Jefferson has defended with great energy. And having laid down, and steadily proceeded on a sound canon of interpretation, he has produced an enlightened and judicious exposition of this summary of the moral law.

## TRANSACTIONS OF THE CONGREGATIONAL DISSENTERS.

HOME MISSIONARY EFFORTS OF THE  
CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF SCOT-  
LAND.

This Institution, though intended at first chiefly for the aid of small and weak churches, has, far beyond what was anticipated (as will appear from its last Annual Report,) assumed all the characteristics of a HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY. About *Forty* faithful and laborious ministers receive aid from its funds, some of whom are entirely supported by it in preaching the gospel, promoting and conducting Sabbath schools, and schools for religious instruction on week-days, distributing religious tracts, encouraging prayer-meetings, &c. Most, if not all of these, would be quite unable to extend their labours beyond their immediate sphere on the Lord's day, and many of them could not continue even in that sphere, but for the help thus afforded them; while not a few of them have, by this means, from eight to ten, and others even from twelve to sixteen stations, where, as often as possible, they preach on Sabbath evenings, and on week-days, once, or twice, or three times in the week, besides making occasional extensive preaching tours to more remote and very destitute parts. Several of these ministers are also the most active agents in promoting county and district Bible, missionary, and school societies, by which services, and so much travelling considerable expenses are incurred, beyond what their own churches are able to defray; yet the loss to the cause of religion would certainly be very great, were the labours of these men to be curtailed, or their sphere of operations in any way narrowed.

The Committee of the Union are providentially favoured with some peculiar advantages in prosecuting the objects they have in view. It is well known that a large proportion of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, (containing a population of upwards of 400,000,) requires the ministry of men

who can preach in the Gaelic language. The Union have at present *thirteen* ministers who possess this valuable talent; all of whom are aided, some of them entirely supported from their funds. Such is the general poverty of the Highland population, their widely scattered state, and the extent of the parishes, (some of which are *sixty* computed miles in length,) intersected by extensive lakes and arms of the sea, or by almost impassable mountains, &c., that there can be no reasonable prospect of the people enjoying a preached gospel, but by means of itinerancies, supported by those who reside in more highly favoured parts of our country. Yet such is the desire of that people to hear the gospel, (many of them travelling a night and a day to hear one sermon,) and such have been the happy effects of late produced by it, that no part of the globe seems to present a more important and encouraging field of missionary labours in the present day; while it is a field that can be occupied at comparatively so little expense. One of the Agents mentions in his journal for last year—

"*July 26. Sabbath.* The day was fine. We met upon the top of a hill. About 400 were present, who heard with much attention. The field here is very promising; there is a great desire to hear, arising, I believe, from a conviction of the need of instruction. 31st. Preached this morning to a people who were glad of the opportunity of thus hearing the word. They had heard but one sermon from their parish minister during the whole of last year: the parish kirk is twenty-four miles from them. Surely in this, and many such like places, so remote, and so destitute of the means of grace, the people must perish for lack of knowledge, unless the gospel is brought to them. *August 1.* This morning embarked in a boat for the island of Scarba, intending to preach the next day, Sabbath, and after an hour's hard rowing, we landed in safety.—



August 2. By eleven o'clock, many boats were seen quite loaded with immortal beings, coming to hear the word, from Jura, Ling, Balnìhua, and Lunga. From the earnest and solemn attention they gave to the word spoken, I would fondly hope that some received real benefit to their immortal souls. After a short interval, I preached again in the evening in the same place; and on finishing my last sermon, many pressed me to visit their islands the following week, if possible, offering to send a boat for me."

Another of these Agents says, in a letter dated 11th July, 1836—

"I have just had a most interesting tour, for three weeks, on the West coast. I travelled about 250 miles, and preached 24 times, through a population of from 6000 to 7000; and I do not think that 50 persons, of all ranks, who could hear, absented themselves from our meetings. I was much comforted in meeting with some Christian friends, and never enjoyed more enlargement and comfort in speaking the truth. There is one district through which I passed, where there are about 3000 souls under the charge of one minister, from whom" (for good reasons stated by the writer) "the parishioners will take neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper, nor will they go to hear him; so that they are falling almost into a state of heathenism. They told me they must place themselves under Dissenters, and why should we not take them up? They are very poor, and could do little or nothing for the support of a minister; but to send the gospel to them, is really the same as sending it to the heathen."

Besides the Gaelic districts, the Congregational Union have a very wide and important field before them, in the numerous islands of Orkney and Shetland, where seven ministers are aided, some of them wholly supported, from the funds. This year, the sum of not less than £600 has been expended in supporting the gospel in the Highlands and Islands, along with a sum of the same amount for the other objects of the Union—the assistance of the smaller churches, and itinerancies, &c., in the Lowlands. And when it is considered that the

churches in the Union are little more than eighty in number, and that about one-third of these need aid from their brethren in supporting the gospel and gospel ordinances among them, it will at once be seen that they have done what they could in seeking the salvation of their countrymen; and that, in soliciting aid from others, it is not to ease them of a burden which they themselves could bear. Indeed, the work is too great for a body comparatively so small; and yet it is so necessary and so important, that the Committee feel that they dare not relinquish any part of it, if assistance can by any means be obtained;—nay, they feel that far more than double the number of labourers is requisite, and might be most advantageously employed.

At the last distribution of funds, in May, of £1200, besides paying off some former debt and incidental expenses, the Treasurer was left in advance not less than £144. 17s. 5d. To liquidate this debt, and enable them to proceed in the work, at least to the same extent, the Committee have resolved on making application to some of their friends and sister churches in England, to whom they have never applied in vain.

Subscriptions and Donations for these objects will be thankfully received by the Rev. Thomas Smith, Sheffield; the Rev. J. A. James, Birmingham; the Rev. R. S. M'All, LL.D. Manchester; the Rev. Gilbert Wardlaw, A.M., Blackburn; the Rev. Mr. Ritchie, Wrentham, Suffolk; the Rev. Mr. Scales, Leeds; and in London, by the Rev. Dr. Henderson, Highbury; the Rev. John Campbell, Kingsland; the Rev. John Burnet, Camberwell; the Rev. William Henry, Tooting; and the Rev. John Campbell, Tabernacle.

#### SUSSEX CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY AND COUNTY ASSOCIATION.

The fourteenth anniversary of this Society, for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge by Preaching, by Sunday Schools, and by Tracts, was held at Hanover Chapel, Brighton, on the 6th and 7th of September.

On Tuesday evening a meeting was

held in the spacious school-room adjoining the Chapel, when, after taking tea together, the friends of the Society had a conference on the state of religion in the county. The Rev. J. Edwards presided, and much interesting and useful information was given from various parts of the county; on the one hand showing the deplorable ignorance and irreligion of many, and on the other stating some very pleasing and encouraging instances of good done by means of Sunday Schools, Tracts, &c.

On the morning of Wednesday, a sermon was preached by the Rev. John Titley, of Shoreham, on "The adaptation of the Gospel to the spiritual necessities of believers."

In the afternoon, the fourteenth annual meeting of the *Association of the Congregational Ministers* of the County of Sussex, was held, the Rev. J. Turnbull, B.A. in the Chair, at which the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted:

"1. That in harmony with the Congregational Churches, and other bodies of Christians, in various parts of the world, it is the avowed and settled conviction of this Christian Association, that the dominion of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in respect to his church on earth, is purely spiritual, and admits of no alliance with temporal power.

"2. That this Meeting deeply sympathises with those brethren, of their own and other denominations, who have suffered loss of goods and imprisonment, with other injuries, for conscience sake, in resisting *passively* the impost of church rates and other exactions, in support of the ecclesiastical establishment.

"3. That consistency requiring, at the present juncture, the expression of an opinion on the subject of Parliamentary grants toward the support of poor Dissenting Ministers, commonly called the '*Regium Donum*;' it is the deliberate opinion of this Meeting, that such grants are incompatible with the principles which we profess; since they are voted out of the Consolidated Fund of the whole nation, who are thus unjustly taxed towards the support of a ministry and a form of religion of which many do not approve.

But on the supposition that the reigning Monarch should spontaneously bestow on poor Dissenting Ministers of our denomination any such tokens of his bounty and royal esteem and favour, out of his own privy purse, it is the opinion of this Meeting that they ought to be received with thankful acknowledgments.

"4. That a Chapel Building Fund, in connexion with the Congregational Union of England and Wales, be established on the following plan:

"I. Object—To establish a fund for the liquidating of all debts on the present chapels, of the congregational order, in the county of Sussex; and for the erection and enlargement of other such chapels; together with school-rooms attached, in those parts of the county where they may be required. Also to aid in the promotion of the same object, in other parts of England and Wales, according to ability.

"II. Fund—Congregational collections, annual or otherwise; annual subscriptions, donations, bequests, &c.

"III. Agency—A general committee, consisting of all the Congregational Ministers of the county, with their Deacons, and Sub-committees, as locally convenient."

On Wednesday evening a public meeting of the Society was held in Hanover Chapel. The Rev. Joseph Turnbull, A.B., having been called to take the Chair, the Rev. John Press, of Heathfield, offered up prayer; and the Chairman explained the object of the Meeting, and referred to the note of John Hey Puget, Esq., in which he apologised for his absence as Chairman of the Meeting, and expressed his views of the great importance of the Society at the present juncture, when superstition and infidelity are attacking with renewed efforts the bulwarks of Christianity.

The Annual Report was then read, which stated that there are in connection with the Society 22 ministers, about 30 congregations, 314 sabbath-school teachers, 34 sabbath-schools, 2602 children, and 22 tract societies, by means of which about 40 villages are receiving religious instruction.

1. The Rev. J. Trego, of London-road Chapel, moved, and the Rev.

John Harris, of Alfriston, seconded, the resolution for the adoption, printing, and distribution of the Report.

2. Moved by the Rev. Dr. Styles, of Claylands Chapel, Brixton, and seconded by the Rev. L. Winchester, of Worthing, and resolved unanimously—"That this Meeting learns from the Report now read, with great satisfaction, that the Congregational Union of England and Wales is adopting general measures of usefulness, for the spread of Divine truth in the world; and more especially, that at its assembly in May last, the *Colonial Missionary Society*, in connexion with the Union, was formed for the purpose of supplying our brethren in foreign lands with the regular means of evangelical instruction. This Meeting, also, is gratified with the announcement of the publication of the Congregational Hymn Book; and trusts that the sacred psalmody of our Christian worship will thereby be conducted with more general edification among the Congregational Churches."

Two or three other resolutions connected with ordinary proceedings of the Society were proposed by the Rev. Messrs. T. Wallace, of Petworth; Wm. Davis, of Hastings; E. Newton, of Cuckfield, &c. The collections and subscriptions exceeded the amount of any preceding year.

#### COLONIAL MISSIONS.

We are happy to announce that our esteemed brother, the Rev. *Henry Wilkes*, M. A. late of Edinburgh, who has accepted the pastoral charge of the Congregational Church at Montreal, Lower Canada, and has engaged to act as a corresponding member of the Congregational Mission to those colonies, safely arrived with his family at New York, August the 18th, on their way thither. They had a tedious passage of fifty days from Liverpool, but suffered no inconvenience but the delay. He conducted family worship on board in the cabin every evening, and preached on the Lord's day when the weather permitted, both to the cabin and steerage passengers. Our esteemed brother will proceed immediately after his arrival to Upper Canada on some important agencies connected with the future proceedings of this interesting

Mission, which we trust is destined to enjoy a large share of the liberality and confidence of our Churches.

#### COMMEMORATION SERVICES AT UNION CHAPEL, ISLINGTON.

On Monday, the 29th of August, being the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of this place of worship, the church and congregation commemorated the day by several interesting services. At seven in the morning, the members assembled for solemn prayer and thanksgiving, when a suitable and affectionate address was delivered by their beloved senior pastor, the Rev. Thomas Lewis, who has continued for thirty years to be their faithful minister.

At twelve o'clock, the foundation stone of a new school, for the education of about 400 children of the poor, (a large proportion of whom are annually clothed by the Christian liberality of the congregation,) was laid by the Rev. Thomas Lewis and Joseph Procter, Esq., in a commodious piece of ground in the rear of the chapel, when, after the children had sung the praises of God, the Rev. J. Watson, the junior pastor, delivered an appropriate address, and Mr. Lewis offered prayer for the Divine benediction. The children were afterwards regaled by the liberality of their friends.

In the evening, the chapel was very numerously attended, to witness the presentation to Mr. Lewis of a handsome silver time-piece, (value 100 guineas,) which, after the laborious and faithful ministerial exertions of his public life, his friends considered it their duty and privilege to present to him. By a resolution of the Committee of Management, and in order that this manifestation of regard might express the general sentiment of the congregation, no single subscription exceeded the sum of five shillings. The time-piece is of massive silver, adorned with an appropriate device, and as a work of art is highly creditable to the taste and skill of the gentleman who designed it.

The business of the evening was commenced by a short and appropriate religious service, conducted by Mr. Watson.

Mr. E. Smith, on behalf of the Committee, presented the time-piece to his honoured Pastor, and in a neat address expressed the feelings of the Church and Congregation, and begged him to accept it, not as a compliment, but as the pledge of the truth and sincerity of the sentiments which are engraven upon its base.

"Presented to the Rev. Thomas Lewis, of Union Chapel, Islington, by a numerous and attached people, to mark their grateful sense of his long and useful services, and to record the exemplary piety, affection, zeal, and judgment which, for more than thirty years, have characterized both his private and public life as a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ."

The Rev. Thomas Lewis then addressed the audience in an affectionate and interesting speech, in which he adverted with much delicacy and lowliness to the prosperous course of his ministry for thirty years, and to the proofs on earth and in heaven that it had not been in vain. We regret that we cannot insert this judicious address at length, but we must not omit one fact which he stated, that besides his own liberal support, the people of Union Chapel had, during the period of his ministry, contributed more than £20,000 for charitable purposes alone. The interesting services of the day were closed with solemn prayer, by the Rev. Dr. Paterson, of Edinburgh.

#### ORDINATION.

On Tuesday, June 14, 1836, the Rev. William Smith, was ordained to the

pastoral office, over the Independent Church at Shaldon, Devon, vacant by the removal of the Rev. W. B. Clulow, to the classical tutorship of Airedale College. The service was commenced by the Rev. R. Littler, of Buxton, who read portions of scripture and presented prayer. The Rev. George Smith, of Plymouth, delivered an introductory discourse on the nature of a Christian church. The Rev. J. Brewer, received the confession of faith, and offered the ordination prayer. The Rev. W. Davies, of Ashburton, gave the charge to the Pastor, and the Rev. William Tarbolton, of Totness, preached to the people. The service, which was well attended, appeared to be accompanied by the gracious presence of the Great Head of the church.

#### REMOVAL, &c.

The Congregational church at Ebenezer Chapel, Ramsgate, have unanimously invited the Rev. Henry Joseph Bevis, of Torquay, Devon, to become their pastor, who will enter on his new duties, (D.V.) in November next. The records of this ancient church extend to the year 1687, in which the town is called Romans-gate. The Rev. George Whitfield, preached his last sermon in England in this pulpit, September, 1769, previous to his embarkation at Deal, for North America.

The truly venerable George Townsend, who is still living, sustained the pastoral office in this church nearly 45 years.

### MISCELLANEOUS INTELLIGENCE.

#### ON THE STATE OF RELIGION IN GERMANY.

*Translated from the French.*

March 24, 1836.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Before we enter on the detail of isolated facts connected with the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in Germany, it may not be uninteresting to describe some of the more general and characteristic features of that religious and political condition of that country. They will show you, on the one hand, the obstacles which oppose the pro-

gress of the Gospel; and on the other, the circumstances which facilitate its propagation.

The leading cause of the extensive influence which has been so beneficially employed for several years in England, America, and France, and which has acted like a powerful lever to stimulate and set in motion the whole religious body, is the *principle of association*. This principle, applied to the advancement of Christianity, has given birth to that noble institution, the British and Foreign Bible

Society, which preaches the Gospel in 159 different languages, and which has adopted for its motto—"No rest until every family in all the nations of the earth shall possess a Bible." It is the principle of association that sends and supports ministers of the Gospel from pole to pole; that introduces into every hut those active and faithful missionaries called religious tracts; which has liberated 800,000 slaves in the English colonies; whilst to the same cause will they soon be indebted for their delivery from the heavier and more galling chains of ignorance and barbarism. If then, by this means, the face of the world has been so changed during the last forty years, it cannot be unreasonable to suppose that it is the principle of association which God will yet make use of in accomplishing his vast design of love and salvation.

Now, in Germany, this underworking principle is scarcely to be recognized; and with the exception of some states, where Bible and Missionary Societies have been instituted, it cannot exist—at least in the present state of our political affairs. This powerful influence, which, like the steam-engine, is to be applied to almost any enterprise, has been exerted in forwarding certain schemes of a political nature, more or less to be reprehended. The consequence is, that the very attempt at association for any object is regarded with so suspicious an eye, that the mines of Siberia would be considered as too mild a punishment for such an offence. The word "society" is with many synonymous with "democracy." Hence you may easily imagine, how difficult, and often how impossible, it is for the most peaceable Christians to unite their efforts in the promulgation of the truth; and more especially in some of the petty states, where despotism and arbitrary power reign undisturbed. Besides the jealousy in the civil authorities, Rationalism, the religious system which predominates, has involved the people with so deep an ignorance, that the idea never occurs to them of an association having for its object the advancement of pure religion.

In many states a religious society is neither acknowledged, nor tolerated on any consideration. In a large town in Germany, I some time ago took part in the business of a committee of a religious society, similar in its design and general features to what in France you designate "An Evangelical Society." It was necessary to impress upon its supporters the propriety of more decision in its efforts, order in its measures, and benevolence to replenish its exhausted finances. At

every proposition of the different members, a sign from the others indicated the impossibility of carrying it into effect; and at every "why?" which naturally followed, the words "the police," were despairingly pronounced and silence ensued. Cannot we make an appeal to our friends to collect for the Society? No, the police would not allow it; besides, that would give publicity to the association, and the police have forbidden meetings of any kind. But cannot we, said another, attempt to distribute religious tracts to dissipate, in some degree, the gross ignorance of the people? No, the police have forbidden it; they caused, you may remember, that poor seedsman, from Wurtemberg, to be followed by the gens d'armes, for having given away some religious tracts to the children he met as he passed along the road. Well! said a third, we have thousands of Jews in our town, and since we are all interested in their deplorably dark state, may we not support a missionary among them, who will distribute and explain the word of God? No, the trial was made some years since; the police would not hear of a missionary residing in the town. There is, then, but one other way in which we can benefit the people, said a fourth, it is this: our peasants read scarcely any thing but their almanacks from one year's end to the other; now our popular almanacks are filled with all kinds of absurdity and trash, why not follow the example of the zealous Christians in Paris and the Canton de Vaud, and publish a popular Christian almanack—thousands of copies would be sold? No; the police prohibit, under a penalty of six crowns, the sale of any almanack not authorized by them. The committee then broke up.

Added to this, the Church and State are so strictly allied in Germany, that the government of the church is but a department of the civil administration. There are even very many pious and sincere Christians, who would consider you almost a revolutionist in politics, and an enemy to religion, if you expressed the desire to see the Church of Christ restored to what it was during the first three centuries, and when, by the way, it flourished most in the enjoyment of times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord—namely, a spiritual separate body, whose interests and affairs were not mixed up with the regulations of the kingdoms of this world. The result of this alliance is, that if there be any revival of religion, any preaching or any means of edification, which does not originate from within one of those "four

walls, surmounted by a tower—called a church, it is considered as an “irregularity,” not only ecclesiastical but civil—a crime which cannot be too severely or too speedily reprobated.

In the capital of the Grand Duchy of Germany, it was publicly announced, that should any one secure the person of \*\*\*\* and deliver him to the police, he would be considered a benefactor to the State. Who, then, is the criminal? it was enquired. He is a foreign merchant. What is his crime? He has been holding meetings among our peasantry, whilst professing to follow his trade. “What an honour!” exclaims a rationalist journal, after having detailed this occurrence,—“What an honour to a government is such a disposition, to protect the truth against the invasion of Sectarian Methodists.”—Thus despotism and a virtual infidelity are united to hinder the propagation of the gospel.

This being the state of things—(but blessed be God, there are some noble exceptions, at the head of which we may mention Wurtemberg and Prussia,) imagine what is likely to be the religious state of a country, where the gospel can be heard only in the four walls before-mentioned, and which frequently resound with the Anti-Christian doctrines of Rationalism! Picture to yourself St. Paul, coming into such a country—he who preached in the most public resorts, in the Areopagus,—and on the sea shore;—or Luther re-appearing in his own beloved and professedly Lutheran country!—these men of God would be thrown handcuffed into prison. What would England now be in a religious point of view, had the rousing appeals which God directed to that nation, by Whitfield and the Wesleys, been hushed by a suspicious and despotic magistracy? Where would those institutions have been which are the brightest glory of Great Britain, and which diffuse their rays of celestial light to the extremities of the globe.

Christians of France! the liberty which God has given you to preach the gospel to every creature, is to be prized by you, as an invaluable treasure!—O may you be enabled to consider and use it, as a talent for which you must render a strict account!

April 16, 1836.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I shall for the present defer the review of general topics commenced in my last, in order to furnish some facts respecting the heart-cheering spread of vital religion, which has lately taken place in one of the most benighted countries of Protestant Germany.

Three years since some friends of the gospel, at the head of whom were Messieurs Bickell, member of the superior tribunal of Appeal in Haynau, and adjutant of the Electoral Prince Ewald, assessor, and the Pastor Lange resolved upon establishing a Missionary Society at Cassel. Rationalism, however, in its boasted tolerance, so strongly opposed it, that the populace, irritated by its influence, assailed the house of the Pastor Lange, and produced such confusion, as to require the presence of a detachment of soldiers, with bayonets and artillery levelled at the crowd, to re-establish order. It was not without some difficulty that these malevolent passions were excited. The old Pastor E. who has preserved in all its integrity the Rationalism of 1780—1790, and who is celebrated for his theological writings, one of which is a “Sermon on the Moon,” commenced at Cassel, from the pulpit, a crusade against the gospel. Very soon the friends of the mission became the objects of the vilest calumny which political journals, day after day, ponred forth with unwearied perseverance. A satire, printed at Leipzig, was industriously circulated at Cassel. No absurdity was too gross to be repeated or to be believed respecting them. A Casselian traveller assured the whole company in the diligence, with the most unblushing confidence, that he had himself seen the Pastor Lange, in baptizing a child, take a little broom to drive away the devil from the little innocent.

Rationalism, that phantom of religion, usurping the name of gospel, that cold denial of all that is divine and life-giving in Christianity, enjoyed so full and peaceable a possession of the whole population, educated as they had been in its barren principles, that the majority of the inhabitants believed the advocates of missions to be a set of Christians never before heard of. Full of this idea, 115 of the parishioners of the Pastor Lange addressed to him a remarkable letter, in which they accused him of founding a new species of Christianity, and of advocating doctrines opposed to the universally received faith of the gospel.—Glad to find they had the honesty to discuss the subject of doctrine, he, with his Bible and Augsburg confession in his hands, triumphantly and with ease refuted the charge brought against him. His reply, as well as the letter which prompted it, have been published; and with the Sermon by E— forms, the commencement of a long series of controversial tracts of a highly important character.

Never, with the exception of what oc-



curred a few years since in some of the Swiss Cantons, were the first effects of a revival of religion, particularly the formation of a Missionary Society, attacked and followed up with greater fury and ignorance of the truth. Rationalism had so stifled all religious feeling and benevolence, that it attributed every display of zeal to some concealed and sinister design. The issue of this agitation was the removal of Lange to a curacy in the country. The enemies of the truth, however, have gained nothing by his dismissal, for his successor, animated by the same spirit, employs his energies in the same cause, and is, like Lange, one of the most active members of the Missionary Society.

Three years have elapsed since these occurrences took place. The formation of the Missionary Society was then the object of most furious attacks; and now I have before me its third report detailing the most encouraging and remarkable proofs of its success. With the society at Cassel nine auxiliary societies are connected and give energy and importance to its operations. Of these the most interesting is that at Marbourg, patronized by Dr. Puchta, Professor of Law, and by many of the University Theological Professors.

The preface to the rules of the Association is so remarkable, as an evidence of the progress of evangelical religion in a region hitherto beclouded by the darkness of Rationalism, that I will make an extract.

"Grounded on a lively faith in Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Mediator of men, by whose merits we confess, with a deep sense of gratitude for the free grace of God, that we have been delivered from the darkness and uncleanness of the world and have become partakers of the blessings of his kingdom.

"In the conviction that the Christian Church is to unite the whole human race in one fold, under one shepherd; and persuaded that the intellectual but worldly education now adopted in Europe will

only serve as a poison to the minds of men when separated from real Christianity; we feel it to be incumbent on all Christians, in virtue of their vocation and privileges, and in obedience to the command, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,' to labour to extend the kingdom of God over the whole earth."

The writer then proceeds to urge the duty of zeal, from the consideration of the lasting consolation which the gospel would administer to the nations who have been subdued by the superior force and injustice of professed Christians; from the salutary re-action of missions in reviving religion at home; from the indefatigable exertions of the wisdom of this world; and the beneficial example of the societies and missionary institutions established in Germany.

The report of the Cassel Missionary Society states the proceeds of the year to be 763 thalers, about 3050 francs. This sum, small as it is, proves how much the Missionary spirit is on the increase in this country, for it has been collected almost exclusively from the working classes, by subscriptions of a few pence.

If we contrast this report with the condition of the country three years ago, when such violent opposition was excited, what may we not expect!

Another remarkable feature in the religious condition of Germany, is the fact that 55 young Christians, almost all Wertenbergians, are candidates for admission into the Missionary Institution at Basle; where, however, from want of room, few of this noble band can be received.

At Frankfort on the Maine, the monthly prayer meeting, hitherto almost unknown, and held in a small room, was, on Easter Monday, renewed in the German reformed church. It was crowded in every part, even to the aisles, and a most delightful and memorable evening it was to the friends of missions.

These facts will certainly show that the Lord is reviving his work in this interesting country.

#### SUPPORT OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CLERGY IN FRANCE.

As we have already given our readers the Budget of 1837 for the various denominations of Protestants in France, it may not be uninteresting to present a similar extract relating to the Roman Catholic religion in that country.

	Francs.
Expenses of regulating the Ecclesiastical Department .....	176,000
Two Cardinal Archbishops and the Archbishop of Paris, at 25,000 francs .....	75,000
Eleven Archbishops, at 15,000 francs .....	165,000
Sixty-six Bishops, at 10,000 francs .....	660,000
Various indemnities for the Archbishops and Bishops, expenses of Bulls, &c. ....	142,000
One hundred and seventy-four Vicars-General .....	365,000

	France.
Six hundred and sixty Canons .....	1,003,500
Three thousand three hundred and one Vicars .....	4,190,100
Twenty-five thousand one hundred and seventy-five Curates .....	20,900,000
New Chapels of Ease to be erected in 1837 .....	40,000
Five thousand four hundred and nineteen Vicars .....	1,896,650
Grants for double service .....	315,000
The Royal Chapter of St. Denis .....	97,000
Two thousand five hundred and twenty-five foundations in Colleges .....	1,010,000
Grants to superannuated Priests .....	490,000
Occasional Grants to the Working Clergy .....	25,000
Grants to aged Nuns .....	550,000
Grants to superannuated Monks of St. John .....	5,000
Expenses of Diocesan Edifices .....	445,000
Purchases, Erections, and keeping in Repair Residences of Bishops and Colleges .....	1,600,000
Grants for Churches and Residences of Priests .....	700,000
Grants to twenty of the Convents .....	142,000
Grants to Foreign Missions .....	14,000
Grants to two private Religious Establishments .....	6,300
	<hr/>
	35,013,150
Deducting Pensions and Allowances for Sees not filled up .....	760,250
Expenses of the Roman Catholic Religion in France .....	<hr/>
	34,252,900

## COMPARATIVE STIPENDS OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH BISHOPS.

The salaries of the prelates of France and England have within a few months been determined by the legislative body of each country. The contrast is remarkable.

	£.	s.	d.
Cardinal Archbishop, 25,000 francs .....	1,041	13	4
Archbishop of Canterbury .....	15,000	0	0
French Archbishop (ordinary) 15,000 francs .....	625	0	0
Archbishop of York .....	10,000	0	0
Archbishop of Paris, 25,000 francs .....	1,041	13	4
Bishop of London .....	10,000	0	0
French Bishop (ordinary) 10,000 francs .....	416	13	4
English Bishop (ordinary) .....	4,500	0	0

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND MINOR CORRESPONDENCE.

Since our former acknowledgments favours have been received from the Rev. Drs. J. P. Smith—Halley—Rev. Messrs. R. W. Hamilton—R. Ferguson—C. B. Kidd—T. Lewis—J. Morison—Thomas Guyer—J. Croasley—J. Rooker—J. Edwards—A. Pope—G. Smith—Algernon Wells—J. Belcher.

Also from Mr. T. T. Sadler.

We hope in our next, to present our readers with a complete digest of the new Acts of Parliament for Registration and Marriage, with some necessary remarks thereon.

## ERRATA IN THE LAST NUMBER.

Page 567, first column, last line, *for engineer, read inquirer.*

„ 569, first column, sixth line from bottom, *for distinction, read destruction.*

„ 560, second column, eleventh line from bottom, *for Russian, read Prussian.*

„ 565, first column, thirty-sixth line from bottom, *for his last, read the last.*